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THE

WORKS OF
W. E. HENLEY

VOLUME

IV

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

ESSAYS

VOL. II

BYRON'S WORLD : 'PIPPIN'
OTHELLO : 'T. E. B.' : OLD ENGLAND
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NOTE

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BYRON'S WORLD

Henry Angelo.

HENRY'S father, Domenico Malevoli Tremamundo ANGELO, a renowned professor of equitation and the sword, was an *ami intime* of Peg Woffington, who fell in love with him—(so Henry says)—at a fencing-match, and whirled him off to England in her own carriage. Here he taught the *manège* and the use of the *arme blanche*, patronised the arts, was everybody's friend, married the daughter of 'Captain Masters, Commander of the *Chester* frigate,' lived honourably, and died when he was eighty-seven, leaving his son (whom he had sent to Eton and to Paris) to reign in his stead. Like Domenico, Henry taught everybody fencing, and knew everybody worth knowing. He had, too, a talent for acting and the singing of comic songs, and he played much at Wargrave with Hell-Gate Barrymore and his following, and in London with the Margravine of Anspach.

Henry Angelo.

An old schoolmate (Dublin) of R. B. Sheridan's, who learned the sword of him, he was particularly associated with Bannister the actor, Rowlandson the caricaturist, Jackson the pugilist (with whom he had rooms in Bond Street), and Bate Dudley, the Fighting Parson; fenced regularly with Edmund Kean; was able to bet fifty pounds that he had dined at the same table with the Prince of Wales ('twas in 1806, at the Neapolitan Club), and to win his wager on the authority of 'Anacreon Moore'; and was, in short, as jovial, buxom, and flourishing a blade as his state in society could show. His acquaintance with Byron began at Harrow ('From his Lordship's affability and pleasant manners I knew more of him than of many I attended there at the time'); and at the Albany, years afterwards, he used to play single-stick daily (at half a guinea a lesson) with the poet, for the express purpose of giving his pupil 'a fine breathing sweat,' and taking down his fat. Angelo has several stories to tell of Byron:—how he (Angelo) hunted down a quotation for him, and so enabled him to win a bet; how they met at Newmarket the day that Captain Barclay walked his

match with Wood, and how Byron drove him to Cambridge (Theodore Hook was of the party), gave him dinner, saw him and Hook to the coach, and 'sent to St. John's College for the good beer it was noted for, when, filling two tumblers, he handed them up himself to us, laughing at the many people who were wondering at his being so very busy waiting on the outside passengers'; how Byron 'gave me an order on Mr. Murray (whom I had first the pleasure of knowing near forty years since, when at the Rev. Dr. Thompson's, Kensington) for several of his books, *Childe Harold*, etc.,' . . . and 'I did not at the time request his signature on the title-page'; how 'I,' Henry Angelo, collected portraits of pugilists and players, from Slack and Betterton downwards, and therewith composed him a certain famous screen, which John Murray the Second bought at the sale in Piccadilly, and which abides in Albemarle Street unto this day. On the whole, Angelo retained so good and moving a memory of his pupil that he cannot recall that time at Cambridge, the 'pleasure' of which was so 'greatly enhanced' by Lord Byron's 'affability and cordial reception,' without a little attempt

Henry Angelo.

Henry Angelo.

at the *cri du cœur* and the *note émue*. 'What must be my feelings now,' he writes (1830), 'when recollecting the scene of that evening—his obliging condescension, our parting, the coach driving off, his huzzas, and the twisting of his hat! Such feelings can never be obliterated.' In effect, *Sunt lacrimae rerum*. . . .

Byron's mother.

My amiable Alecto:— BYRON'S MOTHER, who at this time had taken to the use of fireirons as a means of marking her sense of displeasure with her son. She was Catherine, only Child and heiress of George Gordon of Gight, and she married John Byron, in 1785, the year after the death of his first wife, Amelia d'Arcy, Baroness Conyers, a daughter of the fourth Earl of Holderness, with whom, as Marchioness of Carmarthen, he had eloped some years before. In person she was dumpy and plain, in disposition passionate, in temper furious and tyrannical, in mind a superstitious dullard, and in manners a naturally awkward and untrained provincial. But she was a fortune; and John Byron, a handsome scamp, who was head over ears

in debt, had small difficulty in making her and her money his own. This, from what Moore calls 'an authentic source' (it reads like the family lawyer), is how he carried out his part of the marriage contract :— Byron's mother.

'At the time of the marriage, Miss Gordon was possessed of about £3000 in money, two shares of the Aberdeen Banking Company, the estates of Gight and Monkshill, and the superiority of two salmon-fishings on Dee. Soon after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Byron Gordon in Scotland, it appeared that Mr. Byron had involved himself very deeply in debt, and his creditors commenced legal proceedings for the recovery of their money. The cash in hand was soon paid away,—the bank shares were disposed of at £600 (now worth £5000)—timber on the estate was cut down and sold to the amount of £1500—the farm of Monkshill and superiority of the fishings, affording a freehold qualification, were disposed of at £480; and, in addition to these sales, within a year after the marriage, £8000 was borrowed upon a mortgage on the estate, granted by Mrs. Byron Gordon to the person who lent the money. In March 1786 a contract of marriage in the Scotch form was drawn up and signed by the parties. In the course of the summer of that year Mr. and Mrs. Byron left Gight, and never returned to it; the estate being, in the following year, sold to Lord Haddo

Byron's mother.

for the sum of £17,850, the whole of which was applied to the payment of Mr. Byron's debts, with the exception of £1122, which remained as a burden on the estate (the interest to be applied to paying a jointure of £55, 11s. 1d. to Mrs. Byron's grandmother, the principal reverting, at her death, to Mrs. Byron), and £3000 vested in trustees for Mrs. Byron's separate use, which was lent to Mr. Carsewell of Ratharllet, in Fife-shire.'

In the summer of 1786 she accompanied her husband to France; and, returning to England towards the end of 1787, took a furnished house in Holles Street, and there gave birth to her only child in the late January of 1788. From London she went to Aberdeen, where she was presently joined by Captain Byron. Of course they could not agree; and, after an attempt at life in separate lodgings (at opposite ends of the same street), during which they visited and took tea together, they ceased from speaking, and John Byron, who simply wanted her money, soon left for London. He returned in no great while, and, having squeezed her to the amount of a few pounds more, again departed, and died the next year (1791) at Valenciennes: leaving his foolish, ill-bred, ill-conditioned, ill-served,

yet adoring widow to expend the full amount of her very emotional temperament and habit on the 'lame brat,' their child. He was a lively boy, but very sensitive and shy, and 'in my sullen moods . . . a devil.' What chance had such a son with such a mother? With him, it is told on first-hand authority, 'she would pass from passionate caresses to the actual repulsion of disgust,' and 'the next moment she would devour him with kisses again, and swear his eyes were as beautiful as his father's.' In 1798, on Byron's accession to the title, the pair removed to Newstead; and there she placed her son in the hands of an ignoble quacksalver, whose treatment of the poor boy's malformation—(it consisted chiefly in twisting and wrenching the foot, and in screwing it up in a wooden engine)—inflicted on him many hours of futile and excruciating agony. By the summer of 1799, however, it was borne in upon her, 'daft Gordon' as she was, that the practice of this ignorant brute had failed; so she removed to London, took a house in Sloane Terrace, gave her son to the care of Dr. Baillie, and—having been placed, for some occult reason, on the Civil List for a pension

Byron's mother.

Byron's mother.

of £300 a year — sent him to a private school at Dulwich. At Dulwich Byron might have done well enough, had he been left alone; but patience and tact and self-restraint were not in his mother's nature. She disgusted Lord Carlisle, who was her son's guardian, so that in no great while that highly respectable nobleman was moved to wash his hands of both his ward and his ward's mother; while, as for the Dulwich school, she so exerted her ill-timed and capricious fondness that, when Byron left it for Harrow, he was, says the kindly and painstaking Glennie, 'as little prepared as it is natural to suppose from two years of elementary instruction, thwarted by every art that could estrange the mind of youth from preceptor, from school, and from serious study.' Years wrought no change, save for the worse, in her; and though Byron, by 1806, had contrived to get his own temper fairly well in hand, and was often able to listen to her rants in silence, the scenes between them were many and painful (the comic aspect of the situation is presented with admirable wit and tact in Disraeli's *Venetia*). 'It is told,' says Moore, 'as a curious proof of their opinions of each

other's violence, that, after parting one evening in a tempest of this kind, they were known each to go privately that night to the apothecary's, inquiring anxiously whether the other had been to purchase poison, and cautioning the vendor of drugs not to attend to such an application, if made.' On the present occasion, as we have seen, Byron took refuge in flight. Byron's mother.

Mrs. Byron died at Newstead—which her son had appropriated 'almost exclusively' to her use, and to which he insisted on coming as a guest—in the July of 1811. She had grown extremely corpulent, and had been 'of late indisposed, but not to any alarming degree'; when (so Moore reports) 'a fit of rage, brought on . . . by reading over the upholsterer's bills, was the ultimate cause of her death.' The *Volage* had landed Byron but a very few days before the news of her seizure was conveyed to him; but he reached Newstead too late to see her again in life. On the morning of the funeral he boxed, they say, with Rushton. But everybody has his way of working off an emotion. And Byron, despite the extraordinary quality of his relations with his mother, was passionately grieved

Byron's mother.

by her loss. It was with many tears that he told her maid, who found him watching beside the bed of death, that he 'had but one friend in the world, and she was gone.' And there can be no manner of doubt that Mrs. Byron was immensely fond of him in her way, at the same time that in her way she was immensely proud of him.

R. C. Dallas.

ROBERT CHARLES DALLAS (1754-1824), 'author' (Moore says) 'of some novels, popular, I believe, in their day,' was the son of a doctor, was born at Dallas Castle, and was educated at Musselburgh and at Kingston (under James Elphinstone). He read law at the Inner Temple; but, on attaining his majority, he went to Jamaica, where he had property, and for some time lived there and in the U.S.A. Returning to England, he turned author, and published *Miscellaneous Writings* (1797 : 'Consisting of *Poems*; *Lucretia*, a Tragedy; and *Moral Essays*, with a Vocabulary of the Passions'); *Percival, or Nature Vindicated* (1801), a novel; *Elements of Self-Knowledge* (1802); *Aubrey* (1804); *Tales*

Illustrative of the Simple and the Surprising (1805); and much else. He was a sort of connexion ('Captain George Anson Byron of the Royal Navy, father of the present Lord Byron, had married a sister of Mr. Dallas.' —MOORE); and at this time he introduced himself to Byron's notice in a solemn letter about *Hours of Idleness*: a letter in which he cited, being aggressively, and even ponderously, moral, the good Lord Lyttelton as an example and the wicked Lord Lyttelton as the other thing, and wrote himself down generally the well-meaning, officious, wordy, pompous, and extremely self-satisfied person he was. Byron replied —delighted to be taken seriously, yet with his tongue most plainly in his cheek; and Dallas was presently privileged to assist in the publication of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Four years after, on Byron's return from the East, Dallas was still further privileged, and assisted in the publication of *Childe Harold*, which Byron gave him, and on which he received the profits (£800), as he presently received, in the same way, the profits on *The Corsair* (1813). Then the pair drifted apart; and after Missolonghi Dallas produced an account

R. C. Dallas.

R. C. Dallas.

of Byron against which Hanson and Hobhouse, the poet's executors, procured an injunction, on the strength of certain letters to the Hon. Mrs. Byron which were set forth in its pages. This was just before Dallas's death, when the book was republished in Paris (1824), as *Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron from the Year* 1808 *to the end of* 1814.

William Harness.

WILLIAM HARNESS (1790-1869) was Byron's junior at Harrow. Harness was weak and lame when he entered the school; and Byron fought his battles for him. They fell out, but were reconciled: so that Byron was moved to dedicate the First and Second *Harold* to him, but did not 'for fear it should injure him in his profession.' Writing some years after Harrow, Byron speaks thus of both the estrangement and the friendship:—'We both seem perfectly to recollect, with a mixture of pleasure and regret, the hours we once passed together, and I assure you, most sincerely, they are numbered among the happiest of my brief chronicle of enjoyment. I am now *getting into years*, that is

to say, I was *twenty* a month ago, and another year will send me into the world to run my career of folly with the rest. I was then just fourteen,—you were almost the first of my Harrow friends, certainly the *first* in my esteem, if not in date; but an absence from Harrow for some time, shortly after, and new connexions on your side, and the difference in our conduct (an advantage decidedly in your favour) from that turbulent and riotous disposition of mine, which impelled me into every species of mischief,—all these circumstances combined to destroy an intimacy, which affection urged me to continue, and memory compels me to regret. But there is not a circumstance attending that period, hardly a sentence we exchanged, which is not impressed on my mind at this moment. I need not say more,—this assurance alone must convince you, had I considered them as trivial, they would have been less indelible. How well I recollect the perusal of your "first flights"! There is another circumstance you do not know; the *first lines* I ever attempted at Harrow were addressed to *you*. You were to have seen them; but Sinclair had the copy in his possession when we went home;—and, on

William Harness.

William Harness.

our return, we were *strangers*. They were destroyed, and certainly no great loss; but you will perceive from this circumstance my opinions at an age when we cannot be hypocrites. I have dwelt longer on this theme than I intended, and I shall now conclude with what I ought to have begun. We were once friends,—nay, we have always been so, for our separation was the effect of chance, not of dissension. I do not know how far our destinations in life may throw us together, but if opportunity and inclination allow you to waste a thought on such a harebrained being as myself, you will find me at least sincere, and not so bigoted to my faults as to involve others in the consequences. Will you sometimes write to me? I do not ask it often; and if we meet, let us be what we *should* be, and what we *were*.'—(MOORE.)

In a letter to Moore, written after Byron's death, Harness gives this pleasant and particular account of their friendship :—'A coolness afterwards arose, which Byron alludes to in the first of the accompanying letters, and we never spoke during the last year of his remaining at school, nor till after the publication of his *Hours of Idleness*. Lord

Byron was then at Cambridge; I, in one of the upper forms at Harrow. In an English theme I happened to quote from the volume and mention it with praise. It was reported to Byron that I had, on the contrary, spoken slightingly of his work and of himself, for the purpose of conciliating the favour of Dr. Butler, the master, who had been severely satirised in one of the poems. Wingfield, who was afterwards Lord Powerscourt, a mutual friend of Byron and myself, disabused him of the error into which he had been led, and this was the occasion of the first letter of the collection. Our intimacy was renewed, and continued from that time till his going abroad. Whatever faults Lord Byron might have had towards others, to myself he was always uniformly affectionate. I have many slights and neglects towards him to reproach myself with; but I cannot call to mind a single instance of caprice or unkindness, in the whole course of our friendship, to allege against him.' William Harness.

In effect, Harness was one of the friends whose portraits Byron had painted by Sanders ere his departure for the East. He remembered the Harrow days so well that at Rogers's table he was able to quote

William Harness.

to Moore, who was then (1828-29) engaged upon the *Life and Letters*, such a 'strain of unpremeditated art' as this of Byron's, 'roared out' at a schoolmate who was a violent Bonapartist:—

> Bold Robert Speer was Bony's bad precursor.
> Bob was a bloody dog, but Bonaparte a worser.

He visited at Newstead in 1812, when Byron was correcting the proofs of the First and Second *Harold*. There he met Francis Hodgson, who was 'at work in getting out the ensuing number of *The Monthly Review*,' and for three weeks—weeks of late hours at both ends of the day—'the general talk was of poets and poetry, and who could or who could not write,' though it occasionally 'strayed into very serious discussions on religion.' In due course Harness took orders and a country curacy; but Byron was never afraid of the cloth—(conspicuous among his early friends are Becher, Harness, Hodgson, and Drury, parsons all)—and the intimacy continued unimpaired till 1816 and the Exile, after which it died a natural death. Harness, a person of elegant taste, had always found Byron's poetry 'a little too "strong" for

him'; being Boyle Lecturer at Cambridge, he took occasion to speak of *Cain* as he thought it deserved; and two years after came the end. But though he found Byron's Venetian life still 'stronger' than Byron's poetry, he never ceased from being Byron's champion; and the few pages in which he discusses the Marriage, and the Separation, and the Characters of the parties thereto, are uncompromisingly Byronian, at the same time that they are sane and liberal enough to make you wish that he had written many more. William Harness.

For the rest, he lived an active, blameless, useful life: as minister (1825) of Regent Square Chapel, St. Pancras, where he stayed for twenty years; as Morning Preacher at Trinity Chapel, Conduit Street, and Minister and Evening Lecturer at St. Ann's, Soho; and as Minister of Brompton Chapel, in which capacity he compassed the building of All Souls', Knightsbridge. He edited Shakespeare and Massinger, wrote much for *Blackwood*, and published a certain amount of timid, unexceptionable verse. Moreover, being extremely popular as a preacher, and withal 'a gentleman of the Old School,' he went everywhere and saw everybody. His

William Harness.

lifelong friend (they knew each other as babies) was Mary Russell Mitford, whose *Life* he lived to write; but Sir Walter, Crabbe, Rogers, Sydney Smith, the Kembles, the Derbys, the Lansdownes, Daniel Webster, Washington Irving, the Berrys, Lydia White, Father Mathew, Talfourd, Joanna Baillie, Milman, Dickens, Thackeray, Crabb Robinson—at one or the other time he knew them all. In the end, being very old, he fell down a stone stair in the Deanery at Battle, and was taken up dead.

Lord Holland.

HENRY RICHARD VASSALL FOX, Third Baron Holland, a nephew of Charles James Fox (1773-1840), was educated at Eton and Oxford. In 1797 he married Elizabeth Vassall, the divorced wife of Sir Godfrey Webster, to whom he had already paid £6000 damages as defendant in an action for *crim. con.* The 'constant protector of all oppressed races and persecuted sects' (MACAULAY), he did good work against the Slave-Trade, the Corn Laws, and the Criminal Code; took the other side in the matter of the War and the isolation of Napoleon; and served on the Ministries of

Earl Grey and Lord Melbourne. Also, he wrote gracefully about Spanish literature and his uncle Fox, and edited the Waldegrave *Memoirs*. A good talker, a capital mimic, an engaging and accomplished host, to Sheridan he is 'the only public man I have any attachment for'; his Holland House parties are historical; and in 1833 Ticknor 'cannot help agreeing with Scott that he is the most agreeable man I have ever met,' the reason being that 'to the great resources of his knowledge he adds a *laissez-aller*, arising from his remarkable good-nature which is irresistible.' Of Lord Holland in Parliament, Holcroft, writing in 1799, remarks that 'He has not sufficient vehemence of feeling to become a man of genius'; while to Byron (1813) he is 'impressive from sense and sincerity.' As we shall see, Byron believed himself justified in what he wrote to Becher (that the Edinburgh Reviewers never praise except the partisans of Lord Holland and Co.), and in the Text and Notes of *English Bards* he trounced the Holland House set with all the strength that was in him. Afterwards, being convinced of his error, he was on excellent terms with Lord Holland, to whom he was

Lord Holland.

Lord Holland.

introduced by Rogers, and to whom he dedicated *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), 'With Every Sentiment of Regard and Respect.'

Pratt, the Gleaner.

THIS was SAMUEL JACKSON PRATT (1749-1814). Born at St. Ives (Bucks), he began, it appears, as a parson, but, getting into trouble over women, and quarrelling with his parents, he turned actor, playing under the noble name of Courtney Melmoth in Dublin, and failing (1774) at Covent Garden in Hamlet and in Philaster. After this he took to scribbling—still as Courtney Melmoth; went into partnership (*c.* 1776) with a Bath bookseller named Clinch; and coming to London some time afterwards, fell in with Wolcot, Beattie, Colman, and Æschylus Potter, and took so valiantly to scribbling prose and verse that three columns of the British Museum Catalogue are filled with the titles of his works: among them *Sympathy*: *a Poem* (1788), of which there were four editions within the year, and eleven by 1807; *The Pupils of Pleasure* (1776), translated into French and German, and abused as 'licentious'; *The Fair Circassian*

(1781), a play which, as acted by Miss Farren, afterwards Countess of Derby, went through three editions within the year; and *Gleanings in England* (1799), which is trounced in a letter by Charles Lamb. He is best remembered as the discoverer of Blackett, the cobbler-bard, of whom he published *Specimens* in 1809 and the *Remains* in 1811. Pratt, the Gleaner.

In the MS. of *English Bards* Pratt is thus presented :—

> In verse most stale, unprofitable, flat,
> Come let us change the scene and 'glean' with Pratt;
> In him an author's luckless lot behold,
> Condemned to make the books which once he sold:
> Degraded Man! again resume thy trade—
> The votaries of the Muse are ill-repaid,
> Though daily puffs once more invite to buy
> A new edition of thy *Sympathy*.

But the engaging Dallas, who was a personal friend, prevailed upon the writer to suppress his verses, together with a rider in prose :— 'Mr. Pratt, once a Bath bookseller, now a London author, has written as much, to as little purpose, as any of his scribbling contemporaries. Mr. P.'s *Sympathy* is in rhyme; but his prose productions are the most voluminous.'

Gentleman Jackson.

JOHN JACKSON (1759-1845), better known as Gentleman Jackson, 'Sole Prop and Ornament of Pugilism' (MOORE), was Champion of England from 1795 to 1803, when he retired. The son of that London builder, 'by whom the arch was thrown over the old Fleet Ditch,' Jackson was backed by Harvey Combe, Lord Mayor, and four times member for the City of London, and fought no more than thrice in the Ring:—in 1788, when he beat Fewteral of Birmingham at Smithson Bottom, near Croydon, in the presence of the Prince of Wales; in 1789, when he was beaten by the Brewer of Ingleston, who threw him so heavily as to dislocate his ankle and break the small bone of an arm; and in 1795, when at Hornchurch, Essex, he beat the renowned Mendoza in ten and a half minutes. Yet for over thirty years he was the most picturesque and commanding figure in the sporting-world, and exercised an influence unique in its annals. The truth is, he was a vast deal more than an accomplished boxer and teacher of boxing and a brilliant all-round athlete. He was also a man of character and integrity—polite, agreeable,

reputable, a capital talker, a person of tact and energy and charm. It was at his rooms in Bond Street—('long the most attractive lounge in the West End')—that the Pugilistic Club was founded (1814), which was to the Ring, for the ten or a dozen years of its authority, what the M.C.C. is to the world of cricket now; no mill of moment was possible unless he held the watch or served as referee; he instituted the practice of making a purse for the beaten man, and generally took round the hat himself; he selected and commanded the body of pugilists—Spring, Cribb, Tom Belcher, Richmond, Tom Oliver, and the rest—which kept order at the Coronation of George IV. Byron had always a great regard for Jackson; walked with him at Cambridge, and told an excited remonstrant that 'Jackson's manners are infinitely superior to those of the fellows of my college whom I meet at the high table' (J. W. CLARK); had him to stay at Newstead and at Brighton (always paying the chaise both ways); wrote him friendly letters; and, as late as 1823, described him in a note to *Don Juan* (xi. 19) as 'my old friend and corporeal pastor and master,

Gentleman Jackson.

Gentleman Jackson.

John Jackson, Esq.'—(he was always Mr. Jackson to the Profession and the Press, just as—so 'tis said—a late political leader was always 'MR. Parnell' to the members of his party)—and hoped that he 'still retained the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humour and athletic as well as mental accomplishments.' And two years before Byron wrote thus, Pierce Egan notes, with all his wonted enthusiasm in the matter of fancy types, that 'MR. JOHN JACKSON still continues to increase in the estimation of the *Fancy* in general, at his rooms, No. 13 Bond Street, London, INDEPENDENT OF ALL PARTIES, yet whose most anxious endeavour is to please all parties from the highest to the lowest connected with the Prize Ring.' In 1820 Jackson was presented with 'a service of plate of the most magnificent description . . . to which all ranks contributed, from the prince to the prize-fighter.' In 1824 he gave up his Rooms, 'and retired into private life, occupying a house in Grosvenor Street West, where he still (1841) resides, enjoying the unabated confidence of his old friends.' A great monument—a couchant

lion and a naked athlete (weeping)—subscribed by his pupils, marks his place in Brompton Cemetery. Gentleman Jackson.

In 1818, when Moore wanted to get up the slang of the Fancy for *Tom Cribb's Memorial* (of which 2000 copies were sold in less than a week), Scrope Davies asked him to meet Jackson at dinner, and told him that his opposite was making £1000 a year by teaching the use of 'the raw uns' through the gloves. Moore 'got very little out of' his fellow-guest (he really learned his flash from the ass, Pierce Egan), but promised to go with Jackson and Davies to see the fight between Turner and the Nonpareil at Crawley Downs (4th December 1818). Thus does he tell the tale:—'Breakfasted with Davies at seven. Walked to Jackson's house in Grosvenor Street; a very neat establishment for a boxer. Were off in our chaise at eight. The immense crowds of carriages, pedestrians, *etc.*, all along the road—*the respect paid to Jackson everywhere highly comical.* He sung some flash songs'—(his own *On the High-Toby Spice Flash the Muzzle*, no doubt, among them)—'on the way, and I contrived to muster up one or two myself, much to Scrope Davies's

Gentleman Jackson.

surprise and diversion. The scene of action beyond Crawley, thirty-two miles from town; the combatants Randall and Turner, the former an Irishman, which was lucky, as it gave me some sort of interest in the contest. The thing altogether not so horrid as I expected.' (It lasted two hours and twenty minutes, and Keats, who saw it, 'tapped his fingers on the window pane,' to give Cowden Clarke an idea of the rapidity of the Nonpareil's hits.) 'Turner's face was a good deal de-humanised, but Randall the conqueror had hardly a scratch. . . . A beautiful sunshine broke out . . . and *had there been a proportionate mixture of women in the immense ring formed by the crowd, it would have been a very brilliant spectacle.*'

To be done with Jackson:—He 'showed me' (MOORE, 23rd Feb. 1828) two or three letters of Lord B., which I copied out. Said he had often seen B.'s foot, which had been turned round with instruments, the limb altogether a little wasted; could run very fast. In talking of his courage, said nobody could be more fearless; showed great spirit always 'in coming up to the blows.'

FRANCIS HODGSON (1781-1852) was the son of James Hodgson, Rector of Keston, and Master (by the grace of Jenkinson, first Lord Liverpool) of Whitgift's foundation at Croydon. Here he learned his rudiments; and in 1794 he was sent to Eton, where he had for schoolfellows Henry Drury, Scrope Davies, Charles Skinner Matthews, Sumner, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne. In 1799 he went (naturally) to King's, and there he foregathered with Denman, Merivale, and Robert Bland. In 1806 he got a mastership at Eton; and from 1808 to 1814 he was a tutor at King's. He appears to have fallen in with Byron in 1807, and the friendship grew apace, till in 1809 you find him a guest at Newstead. Like most of the Byron set, and to a greater degree than any but Byron himself, he was fluent in rhyme. One of his critics remarks that he 'literally appears to think in verse'; he certainly 'dropped into poetry' with an ease and with an air which must have been uncommon even in that scribbling age; and in this same year, having already translated

Francis Hodgson.

Francis Hodgson.

Juvenal (1807), and been pleasantly contrasted with Gifford, and done a great deal of reviewing for the *Critical* and the *Monthly*, of which last he was practically Editor, he published his *Lady Jane Grey, a Tale in Two Books: With Miscellaneous Poems in English and Latin*, the harbinger of a whole cloud of published verses, and began to write for the *Quarterly* (Gifford was an old friend of his father's). In this same year, too, he intercepted and detained Moore's challenge to the author of *English Bards*, and made that friendship possible which began (at a dinner at Rogers's) soon after Byron's return. In 1811 he is found calling on his noble friend to cut short his tour and make love and verse at home :—

> Return, my Byron, to Britannia's fair,
> To that soft pow'r which shares the bliss it yields;
> Return to Freedom's pure and vigorous air,
> To Love's own groves and Glory's native fields.

The tour being done, he bursts anew into apostrophic song :—

> Alone, my Byron, at Harrovian springs—
> Yet not alone—thy joyous Hodgson sings, etc.

Indeed, the two were on terms of peculiar intimacy. Hodgson was deeply concerned

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for Byron's soul, and at Newstead Harness heard him argue for Christianity to such a purpose and in such a spirit that he could not, 'at a distance of more than fifty years,' recall the experience 'without a deep feeling of admiration for the judicious zeal and affectionate earnestness (often speaking with tears in his eyes) which Dr. Hodgson evinced in his advocacy of the truth.' In the same spirit, when Byron found that Hodgson, who had engaged to pay his father's debts, was unable to marry until that engagement was fulfilled, he gave him a thousand pounds, posted to Oxford to see the young lady's mother, and succeeded in making the marriage (1815). Francis Hodgson.

In 1814 Hodgson made the acquaintance of Mrs. Leigh, with whom he was soon on the friendliest and the most confidential terms —(they continued till the end)—and broke ground with Miss Milbanke by writing to her the particulars of a certain appearance in the Senate House, when Byron was received by the assembled youth with peal on peal of 'the most rapturous applause.' In 1816 he came to London at Mrs. Leigh's request, and wrote twice to Lady Byron in the interest of peace and his friend. It was

Francis Hodgson.

to no purpose, as we know, and Byron went into banishment. Out of it he writes thus of Hodgson, who had taken orders, and had been presented (1816) to the living of Bakewell, in Derbyshire:—

> 'I hear that Hodgson is your neighbour. . . . You will find him an excellent-hearted fellow, as well as one of the cleverest; a little, perhaps, too much japanned by preferment in the Church and the tuition of youth, as well as inoculated with the disease of domestic felicity, besides being overrun with fine feelings about women and constancy . . . but otherwise a very worthy man. . . . Pray remember me to him, and say I know not which to envy most—his neighbourhood, him, or you.'

Hodgson, on his part, too much japanned or not, was ever a devout Byronian. He was one of the mourners at Hucknall, and for some time thought of writing his dead friend's life. He abandoned the idea as soon as he heard that the work had been assigned to Moore, and gave that writer, (who speaks of him with unfailing cordiality, and notes that he is considered 'a blessing' to his parish) all the help he could. In 1836 Lord Melbourne offered him the Archdeaconry of Derby; in 1838 he married (his

first wife, a sister of Mrs. Henry Drury, had died some five or six years before) a daughter of his old friend Denman; in 1840 he was made Provost of Eton. The story of his work in this last capacity need not here be told. Enough that he died in harness; that he wrote verses (as Byron said he would write verses) 'to the end of the chapter'; and that he left behind him none but friends or admirers, or both. Francis Hodgson.

THE son of a man of fortune, who contested Bristol, sat for Grampound, and in 1812 was made a baronet, JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE was born at Redland (near Bristol), and was partly educated at a local dissenting school, whence he was sent to Westminster (on the advice of his father's friend, the Marquess of Lansdowne), and so to Trinity College, Cambridge. There he met Byron, and 'after hating me,' the latter writes, 'for two years, because I wore a *white* hat and a *grey* coat, and rode a *grey* horse (as he himself says), took me into his good graces, because I had written some poetry.' At Cambridge, Byron adds, 'he did great things.' That is, 'he founded the John Cam Hobhouse.

John Cam Hobhouse.

Cambridge "Whig Club"'—(this Hobhouse denied with heat, like the good Radical he was)—'and the Amicable Society, which was dissolved in consequence of the members constantly quarrelling, and made himself very popular with "us youth," and no less formidable to all tutors, professors, and heads of colleges.' Being a man of wit and parts, with a genuine tincture of letters, he began, of course, by making verses. The lines on Bowles in the First Edition of *English Bards* are his:—

'Stick to thy sonnets, man!—at least they sell.
Or take the only path that open lies
For modern worthies who would hope to rise:
Fix on some well-known name, and, bit by bit,
Pare off the merits of his worth and wit;
On each alike employ the critic's knife,
And when a comment fails, prefix a life;
Hint certain failings, faults before unknown,
Review forgotten lies, and add your own;
Let no disease, let no misfortune 'scape,
And print, if luckily deform'd, his shape:
Thus shall the world, quite undeceived at last,
Cleave to their present wits, and quit their past;
Bards once revered no more with favour view,
But give their modern sonneteers their due;
Thus with the dead may living merit cope,
Thus Bowles may triumph o'er the shade of Pope':—

and in 1809, he published a certain mis-

cellany—(Skinner Matthews, with whom, as his most intimate friend, he was very often at variance, used to call it the *Miss-sell-any*) —of *Imitations and Translations from the Antient and Modern Classics; Together with Original Poems Never Before Published.* But from Falmouth onward, despite the desperate terms in which Byron presents him:— John Cam Hobhouse.

> Hobhouse, muttering fearful curses,
> As the hatchway down he rolls,
> Now his breakfast, now his verses,
> Vomits forth, and d——ns our souls:—

he appears to have left rhyme to his friend; for he set forth the results of their expedition, as he perceived them, in a solid volume of stout and serviceable prose. This was the book now known as *Travels in Albania, Roumelia, and Other Provinces of Turkey* (1812), which went into a Second Edition in a year or so, and was reprinted in 1855. A constant guest at Newstead, he was present (as best man) at the Marriage (2nd January 1815: it was to him that the bride addressed the often-quoted 'If I am not happy, it will be my own fault'); and he served his friend most loyally through those troubled and desperate days which preceded the Exile

John Cam Hobhouse.

(25th April 1816). In the summer of the same year he joined that friend at Diodati; and some circumstances of their life are set forth in the *Swiss Journal*—(addressed to Augusta Leigh)—extracts from which were published by Moore. (It was at this time that, as he tells you at the very outset of his *Italy* (1859), he saw Byron 'deface with great care' the 'atheist and philanthropist written in Greek,' which Shelley had inscribed after his own name in an inn-album.) In 1817, after a round of travel, he rejoined Byron at La Mira, and found him deep in the Fourth *Harold*. 'It'—the first draft —'was much shorter than it afterwards became, and it did not remark on several objects which appeared to me peculiarly worthy of notice. I made a list of these objects, and, in conversation with him, gave him reasons for the selection. The result was the poem as it now appears, and he then engaged me to write notes for the whole canto.' Most of this work was done at Venice—'Where I had the advantage of consulting the Ducal Library'; and in the sequel the commentary grew to so great a bulk that only a part could be attached to the poem, the rest of it being published

separately (*Historical Illustrations to the Fourth Canto of 'Childe Harold'; Containing Dissertations on the Ruins of Rome, and an Essay on Italian Literature*, London, 1818). Byron's regard for the writer was instantly attested by his Dedication (2nd January 1818) of his magnificent achievement 'to one whom I have known long and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril—to a friend often tried and never found wanting;—to' John Cam Hobhouse, already (1816) the dedicatee of *The Siege of Corinth*. John Cam Hobhouse.

There was another meeting (at Pisa) in 1822. These were the years of *Cain*, the *Vision*, the *Juan* (Hobhouse was one of that 'cursed puritanical committee' which on moral grounds objected to the publication of this last), Missolonghi; and then, in the July of 1824, he, as Byron's intimate and executor, took a boat, and boarded the *Florida* in Sandgate Creek. 'Three dogs' (he writes) 'that had belonged to my friend were playing on the deck. I could hardly bear to look at them. . . . I cannot describe

John Cam Hobhouse.

what I felt during the five or six hours of our passage. I was the last person who shook hands with Byron when he left England in 1816. I recollected his waving his cap to me, as the packet bounded off on a curling wave, from the pier-head at Dover, and here I was now coming back to England with his corpse.' It was John Murray, not Hobhouse himself, who, writing in Hobhouse's name and without Hobhouse's instructions, was politely snubbed by Dean Ireland in the matter of a place for Byron in the Abbey among his peers. But Hobhouse was responsible for all the other circumstances of the obsequies: from the disembarkation of the coffin at the London Docks Buoy—('There were many boats round the ship . . . and the shore was crowded with spectators')—and the passage of the barge to Westminster Stairs, to the deposition in the little church at Hucknall Torkard, which, with the churchyard, was 'so crowded that we could scarcely follow the body up the aisle.' ('I was told,' he adds, 'that the place was crowded till a late hour in the evening, and that the vault was not closed till the next morning.') When he left Hucknall Torkard the Corporation of

Nottingham offered him the freedom of the city; but 'I had no inclination for the ceremonies with which the acceptance of the honour,' etc., and 'I therefore declined it.' John Cam Hobhouse.

And his work as Byron's friend and champion was in nowise done when he turned his back upon Hucknall Churchyard. He took part in that very scandalous incident in the story of Westminster Abbey—the closing of its doors upon the effigies of perhaps the greatest, and certainly the most famous, Englishman of his generation. Hobhouse, then, was largely instrumental in forming a Committee, and in procuring subscriptions, for the erection of a memorial to Byron; and among those associated with him to this end were Goethe, Scott, Campbell, Rogers, Moore, Malcolm, Lockhart, Bowles, Mackintosh, Jeffrey, Stratford Canning, Charles Kemble, Isaac Disraeli, and Peel; with Lords Holland, Sligo, Lansdowne, Cowper, Normanby, Nugent, and Dudley, the Duke of Devonshire, and the Earl and Countess of Jersey. At Hobhouse's suggestion the work was undertaken by Thorwaldsen, for so small a sum as a thousand pounds. But Dean Ireland refused the Poet's statue, as he had barred out the

John Cam Hobhouse.

Poet's body; and it lay at the Custom House, unpacked, for many years. Dr. Ireland was succeeded in 1842 by Dr. Turton, afterwards Bishop of Ely; Byron's right to a place in Poets' Corner was denied by Dr. Turton, as twice before by Dr. Ireland; his denial was applauded by the then Bishop of London (Blomfield) in his place in the House of Lords; and Hobhouse replied to his Lordship (1844) in a pamphlet, privately printed, but reproduced as an appendix to *Travels in Albania*, which is excellent reading still. It was to no purpose. The Abbey doors are closed on Byron yet; and the Thorwaldsen, after nearly half a century of seclusion, was at last accepted by Master Whewell (largely at the instance of the Messrs. De la Pryme) for the Library of Byron's old college, whence it is not likely to be removed.

'A man,' says Byron, 'of learning, of talent, of steadiness, and of honour': a man, as we can see, of singular alertness of mind, energy of temperament, integrity of purpose, and strength of character and will: Hobhouse is honourably remembered, apart from the friendship which is his title to enduring fame, as an influential politician, and as a

diligent, adroit, and faithful servant of the State. An original Radical and Reformer, he began, being one of the Rota Club, by getting committed to Newgate for a breach of privilege; went on to be elected (with Burdett) for Westminster, which he represented for thirteen years; was Secretary for War, Chief Secretary for Ireland, Commissioner for Woods and Forests, and twice President of the Board of Control; and in 1857 was raised to the peerage as Lord Broughton de Gyfford. John Cam Hobhouse.

WILLIAM GIFFORD (1757-1826)—'the asp, Gifford,' as Mr. Swinburne calls him—began life as a shoemaker's apprentice; had an extremely arduous and difficult youth; raised himself to eminence and authority by sheer force of character and intelligence—both limited and in some sort vitiated, no doubt, but both indomitable and real; and, having edited *The Anti-Jacobin* (1797-98), was made Editor of the *Quarterly*, on its establishment in 1809. He did good service to literature in *The Baviad* (1794), *The Mæviad* (1795), *The Epistle to Peter Pindar* (1800)—(in the two first he utterly annihilated the silly set of poetasters William Gifford.

William Gifford.

known as the Della-Cruscans; and in the second he checked the insolence of as bold and hard-hitting a ruffian as the journalism of the time could boast)—and, especially, in his editions of *Massinger* (1805), *Jonson* (1816), and *Ford* (1827), which contain much sound work, and set forth the results of wide reading and the operations of a clear, vigorous, clever, and less prejudiced than narrow mind. Also his *Juvenal* (1802) has a certain spiteful merit, but is not much read now. For his literary temper was atrocious; his criticisms, whether aggressive or corrective, seem the effect of downright malignity; in the long-run you are tempted to side with his victims. Byron, however, was always a 'fervent' of Pope; to Byron Gifford represented the Pope tradition at its best; for Gifford Byron entertained an immense (and very fatuous) respect ('I have always considered him,' he writes to Murray a very little while before his death, 'as my literary father, and myself as his "prodigal son"'); Byron was ever ready to submit himself to Gifford's judgment; and to Gifford Byron 'gave *carte blanche* to strike out or alter anything at his pleasure in *The Siege of Corinth*' as it was passing through

the press. Monstrous though it seem to us now, in fact, this alliance between Leviathan and a blind-worm (so to speak) was genuine, and the sincerity of neither party to it can be impugned. In 1808 it was merely one-sided; for Gifford scarce recked at all of Byron's existence, and Byron himself was only the poet of a lot of *juvenilia*. But it was already possible, by reason of Byron's simplicity and good faith; and in a very few years it became a rather potent fact. William Gifford.

'BOB GREGSON, P. P.' (='Poet of Pugilism'), was born (1778) in Lancashire; 'filled the situation of Captain of the Liverpool Wigan Packet for several years with credit and respect'; fought his way to the Championship of his County; came to London, and commenced pugilist; was twice beaten by Gully (1783-1863) for the Championship, once in October 1807 and again in May 1808; was beaten for the Championship by Cribb (1781-1848) in February 1809; and, retiring from the Profession, was for some time landlord of the Castle Tavern, Holborn—'Bob's Chop-house,' it was called—a headquarters of the Fancy during the brightest years of the Bob Gregson, P. P.

Bob Gregson, P. P.

Ring. As he couldn't make the Castle pay (he was succeeded by the eminent Tom Belcher, who could) he left London for Dublin, where he set up first 'A School for teaching the Art of Self-defence,' and next was landlord of The Punch-House, Moor Street. He died in Liverpool in 1824. He was a boxer of tremendous energy, courage, and bottom (in his first fight with Gully as in his battle with Cribb, he had his men beaten to a standstill, so that it was feared that Gully would die, while Cribb fell down, and 'did not recover for some few minutes'); a fine figure of a man (he stood six feet one, and is reported to have sat to Lawrence, and to have been lectured upon by Carlisle, Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy); a lover of tunes and verses, and no bad hand at a 'chaunt'; withal, a person of manners and sentiment. See *Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress*:—

> My eyes! how prettily Bob writes!
> Talk of your *Camels*, *Hogs*, and *Crabs*,
> And twenty more such Pidcock frights—
> Bob's worth a hundred of these dabs, etc.

It is characteristic of the age that Ben

Drury, probably a parson, and certainly an Eton Master, should be found pleading a bankrupt boxer's cause; and it is characteristic of Byron, who was afterwards a member of the Pugilistic Club—one of the hundred-and-fifty Corinthians, that is, with whose countenance and inside whose ropes and stakes all decent mills were done,—who made, among others, the match between Dogherty and Tom Belcher, who saw (he says) all Cribb's fights, and who may very well have seen both of Gregson's with Gully, that he should be found willing impecunious as he is, to come to a bankrupt boxer's aid. For these were the Golden Years of the Ring: when Pugilism was to the people of England all, and more than all, that Cricket and Football are to the people of England now; so that a trial between two famous artists—as Cribb and Molineaux, or Spring and Langan, or Painter and Oliver—would be fought in the presence of some twenty thousand men, the most of whom had ridden, or driven, or padded the hoof, a many miles to see, at the risk of broken heads and ravished pockets; while £100,000 would change hands on the event. We have seen (*ante*,

Bob Gregson, P. P.

Bob Gregson, P.P. p. 22) how Mr. Jackson, the King of Milling, who did the most of any man that ever lived to make Pugilism respectable (as Jem Belcher made it artistic and heroic), kept, and deserved to keep, the best of company, and how two poets, Keats, the high-priest of beauty (and the most pugnacious of mortals), and 'Anacreon' Moore witnessed the great affair between Randall and Turner. This was in 1818, ten years after Ben Drury's appeal; and in 1807, eleven years before it, here (according to the late Thomas Constable's *Archibald Constable and His Literary Correspondents*, Edinburgh, 1873) is how Alexander Gibson Hunter, 'Forfarshire laird and Edinburgh bookseller,' the Great Mogul's first partner, in company with 'the Bailie' (his father), fared forth on Fox Maule's coach, 'to see the great fight between Belcher and Cribb,' at what he calls 'Mosely Hurst near Hampton Court' (Moulsey was a favourite spot with Mr. Jackson and his lieges; for at Bushey lived H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, and His Highness loved the sport). 'Mosely Hurst,' says Hunter, 'is the most beautiful meadow I almost ever saw, hard and

smooth as velvet, and of great extent'; and although it had been bruited abroad that the ring would be pitched at Newmarket, which sent forth 'many a hundred on the wrong track,' yet had we 'fully 10,000, I suppose, present as it was, and many hundreds of carriages, horses, carts, *etc.*' Captain Barclay of Urie—(who had made the match for Cribb, and was presently to train him for the historic *reprise* with Molineaux)—'received us, and put us across the river in a boat'; and 'among the gentlemen present were the Duke of Kent'—a familiar title, is it not?—'Mr. Wyndham (*sic*), Lord Archibald Hamilton (a famous hand, I am told), Lord Kinnaird, Mr. T. Sheridan, *etc. etc.*,' while 'the honourable Barclay (*sic*) Craven was judge.' In pushing to the ring-side, the Bailie got 'made a *wild goose*' (that is, his hat was knocked over his eyes, and when he put up his hands to save it, he wasn't allowed to put them down again while a single pocket remained unvisited); and when at last we reached it, we found the circle of carts and carriages 'so close and so broad, and such a crowd and squeeze of people, that I could neither force my way through

Bob Gregson, P. P.

Bob Gregson, P. P.

nor get back,' so 'I crawled through below the carriages, at the immense hazard of death from carriage wheels, kicks of horses, etc.' For the fight itself, enough that Cribb was a renowned 'glutton'; that Jem Belcher, the man of genius who had reinspired and renewed the art, and who stands to Pugilism much as 'the Doctor' stands to Cricket, had lost an eye at rackets four years before, but was still capable of administering tremendous punishment; that it lasted some forty minutes; and that 'the great science and power displayed by both parties made me consider this a much less cruel and more manly and entertaining amusement than I could have believed possible.' Hunter, remember, was a Scot abroad; and in Scotland Pugilism never thrived. But in England Pugilism was a part of the nation's life and a moving factor in the nation's art and politics. When Moore had to appeal (in the Whig interest) to the general sentiment of the people, he cast his argument in the lingo of the Fancy, as in *Tom Cribb to Big Ben*—('Big Ben!' the *nom de guerre* of a famous bruiser, was a popular nickname

for the Regent)—and *Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress.* Hazlitt's account of the fight between Bill Neate and the terrific Hickman is among the classic pages of modern prose. Not by any means the worst of Keats's friend, John Hamilton Reynolds, are the verses he found at the ring-side, the Sonnet on Randall:— Bob Gregson, P. P.

Good with both hands, and only ten stone four:—

and the rest. In a famous speech Windham compared the spirit of those who watched the fight between Maddox and Richmond to that of the combatants at Talavera and Vimeira. In 1826 the Duke himself is found subscribing £30 towards a purse to be fought for under his eye, by Young Dutch Sam and another, on the course at Ascot. When Eldon, as he passed into the House for a big debate on Catholic Emancipation, stopped to shake hands with Plunkett (1828), 'That reminds me,' quoth Lyttelton to the Irishman, 'of Gregson and Gully shaking hands before they *set-to.*' It is told of Grey, the Foreign Secretary in 'the Talents,' that he sent an express, 'upon public service,' to Windham (Secretary for War) with the result of the

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second mill between these same two heroes. And it is told of Edmund Kean that he found the supreme moment of his Richard, when, in Hazlitt's phrase, 'he fought like one drunk with wounds,' in the last effort of a beaten boxer. A dreadful age, no doubt: for all its solid foundations, of faith and dogma in the Church and of virtue and solvency in the State, a fierce, drunken, gambling, 'keeping,' adulterous, high-living, hard-drinking, hard-hitting, brutal age. But it was Byron's; and *Don Juan* and *The Giaour* are as naturally its outcomes as *Absalom and Achitophel* is an expression of the Restoration, and *In Memoriam* a product of Victorian England.

Lord Carlisle.

FREDERICK HOWARD (1748-1825), Fifth Earl of Carlisle, one of the Commissioners to America, 1778; Viceroy of Ireland, 1780; thanked by the House for 'the wisdom and purity of his administration,' 1782; Author of *Tragedies and Poems* (1801), *Thoughts on the Present Condition of the Stage* (1808), and so forth. A son of Isabella Byron, sister to the Wicked (Fifth) Lord, the Court of Chancery had

made him Byron's guardian, and to him Byron dedicated *Hours of Idleness*. The compliment was coldly—not to say ungraciously—received. But Byron, whether he resented it or not, had no mind to quarrel, and in *English Bards* began by 'Crowning a new Roscommon in Carlisle.' Before the copy went to press, however, he had applied to Lord Carlisle for certain information, and had been snubbed. Also, being 'under the impression that it was customary for a young peer, on first taking his seat, to have some friend to introduce him, he wrote to remind Lord Carlisle that he should be of age at the beginning of the session, and received a mere formal, and, as it appeared to him, cold reply, acquainting him with the technical work of procedure on such occasions' (MOORE). As was inevitable, the couplet came out, and, in the end, the attack was delivered as we know it now :— Lord Carlisle

> No more will cheer with renovating smile
> The paralytic puling of Carlisle.

That Byron lived to regret his bitterness is shown by a letter to Rogers (1814) in which

Lord Carlisle.

he asks if there is 'any chance of a possibility of making it up with Carlisle,' and by the 'young, gallant Howard' stanza in the Third *Harold* (xxix-xxxiii). With regard to the origin of the constraint between Byron and Carlisle, Murray's Editor quotes ('from two unpublished letters') these extracts:—

'Nov. 11, 1804. You mistake me if you think I dislike Lord Carlisle. I respect him, and might like him did I know him better. For him *my mother has an antipathy*—why, I know not. I am afraid he could be but of little use to me; but I dare say he would assist me if he could; so I take the will for the deed, and am obliged to him, exactly in the same manner as if he succeeded in his efforts.'—'Nov. 21, 1804. To Lord Carlisle make my warmest acknowledgments. I feel more gratitude than I can well express. I am truly obliged to him for his endeavours, and am perfectly satisfied with your explanation of his reserve, though I was hitherto afraid it might proceed from personal dislike. For the future, I shall consider him as more my friend than I have hitherto been *taught* to think.'

Yet five years afterwards the ward was so little acquainted with his guardian as not to know of the 'nervous disorder,' which

afflicted Lord Carlisle, and to which—to Byron's indignation—it was supposed that 'paralytic puling' was a direct and open reference. Lord Carlisle.

CHARLES JOHN, Eighth Viscount Falkland (1768-1809), Captain, R.N., was mortally wounded in a duel by a Mr. Powell, and died the same day. The quarrel appears to have taken place in the Argyle Institution (or some such place), which was part hell and part assembly rooms. Hence the lines in *English Bards* :— Lord Falkland.

> The jovial caster's set, and seven's the nick,
> Or—done!—a thousand on the coming trick!
> If, mad with loss, existence 'gins to tire,
> And all your hope or wish is to expire,
> Here's Powell's pistol ready for your life,
> And, kinder still, two Pagets for your wife.

In a note to this passage Byron writes:— 'I knew the late Lord Falkland well. On Sunday night I beheld him presiding at his own table, in all the honest pride of hospitality; on Wednesday morning, at three o'clock, I saw stretched before me all that remained of courage, feeling, and a host of passions. He was a gallant and successful

Lord Falkland.

officer: his faults were the faults of a sailor [those of dissipation]—as such, Britons will forgive them. He died like a brave man in a better cause; for had he fallen in like manner on the deck of the frigate to which he was just appointed, his last moments would have been held up by his countrymen as an example to succeeding heroes.' In a letter to Hanson (8th February 1809), Byron, after remarking that he is 'dunned from noon till twilight,' and that he must have money or 'quit the country,' adds this:—'If I do not get my seat immediately, I shall sail with Lord Falkland in the *Désirée* frigate for Sicily.' Yet, soon after the duel, says Moore, he 'reminded the unfortunate widow that he was to be godfather to her infant; the child was christened Byron-Charles-Ferdinand-Plantagenet Cary, and after the ceremony the poet inserted a five hundred pound note in a breakfast cup . . . not discovered till he had left the house.'

William Beckford.

WILLIAM BECKFORD (1759-1844) of *Vathek* (1787), that masterpiece of wit, imagination, and narrative, written at twenty-two, and in a single sitting of 'three

days and two nights,' during which time 'I never took off my clothes,' so that 'the severe application made me very ill.' At the time of Byron's writing he was still the Beckford of Fonthill and its Tower, which he did not sell till 1822. But the Beckford of Cintra (1794-96) was already so completely of the past, that Byron, not long after this very Letter, could address him in these terms:— William Beckford.

Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of pleasure plan,
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow:
But now, as if a thing unblest by Man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide:
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied;
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide!

In 1822 he became the Beckford of Bath, where he built him another Tower, and shut himself up with his books, his pictures and statues, his moods and humours and caprices; and then in 1834 he published his third book, the excellent series of letters entitled *Italy: with Sketches of Spain and Portugal.* In that year, too, he reprinted

William Beckford.

his *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters*, written at seventeen, and still amusing reading of a kind; and in 1835 he published his *Recollections of an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alobaça and Batalha*. This is all his literary baggage; and from the *Recollections* onward till his death he was a resolute, invisible recluse. But at eleven he had succeeded to the worth of a million of money; and he had sat in Parliament (once for Eccles and once for Hindon), known the greatest grief that can befall a man, lived as he would with none to say him nay, produced such a master-story as must live as long as the French in which it was written and the English into which it was translated, and thereby approved himself the best Voltairean bred in England before the coming of Benjamin Disraeli. As to Byron's description of him, this from Moore (*Diary*: 18th October 1818) may serve to eke it out:—'Beckford wishes me to go to Fonthill with R[ogers]; anxious that I should look over his *Travels* . . . and prepare them for the press. Rogers supposes he would give me something magnificent for it,—a thousand pounds, perhaps. But if he were to give me a hundred times that

sum, I would not have my name coupled with his. To be Beckford's *sub*, not very desirable.' William Beckford.

ALI PASHA (1741-1822), called 'the Lion,' born at Tepeleni, Albania. The son of a plundered father and a very tigress of a mother, he began his career ('tis said) by finding a treasure, with which he raised an army, and took merciless and summary vengeance on the thieving Pasha who had spoiled his house. Then, having slain his brother, and shut up his mother for the crime, he took arms for the Porte against the Vizier of Scutari, and, being rewarded for his services with a sort of lieutenancy of police, went hand and glove with the very brigands he was commissioned to keep in check. Recalled in disfavour, he bribed himself free again; fought for the Porte against Austria and Russia (1787); was given the Thessalian Pashalik of Trikala; and laying hands on Yanina, part forged, part bribed, part threatened himself into the Pashalik thereof. He intrigued (1796 and 1807) with Napoleon; he took Ali Pasha.

Ali Pasha. Prevyza from the French (1797); he subdued and massacred the Suliotes; he sought alliance with the English, got hold of Parga, and made himself so living a terror to the Sultan, that his deposition was ordained, and he was at last forced back upon, and shut up in, Yanina. In the end, he yielded on the strength of an oath that his life would not be taken nor his treasures forfeited, and received the bowstring there and then. His head, being sent to Constantinople, and spiked outside the seraglio, was cheapened by a native merchant as a good enough speculation for the London show-market (Ali was well known in England, where everybody read the *Harold*); but the scheme 'was defeated by the piety of an old servant of the Pasha,' who bribed the executioner with a higher price, and bestowed decent sepulture on the relic. He was at once a bloody tyrant, an admirable soldier, and a vigorous and enlightened ruler. 'A short man,' says Hobhouse, 'about five feet five inches in height, possessing a very pleasing face, fair and round, with blue quick eyes, and not at all settled into Turkish gravity' (*Travels*, etc.). And Byron, after calling him a 'man of war and

woes,' continues thus (Second *Harold*, lxii.) :— Ali Pasha.

> Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
> While gentleness her milder radiance throws
> Along that aged venerable face,
> The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

Robert Adair.

ROBERT (afterwards SIR ROBERT) ADAIR (1763-1855), Ambassador at Vienna (1806), Constantinople (1808-11), Brussels (1831-5), and Berlin. The son of Sergeant-Surgeon Adair and Lady Caroline Keppel, he went to Westminster School and thence to Göttingen, where he fell in love with his tutor's daughter, and thus (being an ancient Whig) suggested to George Canning the character of Rogero ('Adair was ever an enthusiastic admirer of the fair sex,' Lord Albemarle says, and perhaps the name sets forth a synonym too liberal for discussion here), and a certain classic in *The Rovers, or The Double Arrangement* :—

> Whene'er with haggard eyes I view
> This dungeon that I 'm rotting in,
> I think on those companions true
> Who studied with me at the U-
> -niversity of Göttingen
> -niversity of Göttingen.

Robert Adair.

This was in the Thirtieth *Anti-Jacobin* (June 1798); but it was by no means Adair's first appearance in that print. In 1796 he had published *Part of a Letter from Robert Adair, Esq., to the Right Hon. C. J. Low: Occasioned by Mr. Burke's Mention of Lord Keppel in a Recent Publication.* Hence the description in the Eleventh Number:—

'Or is it he,—the youth, whose daring soul
With *half a mission* sought the Frozen Pole,
And then, returning from the unfinished work,
Wrote *half a letter*—to demolish Burke?
Studied Burke's manner,—aped his forms of speech;
Though when he strives his metaphors to reach,
One luckless slip the meaning overstrains,
And loads the blunderbuss with Bedford's brains':—

with this note on the last line:—'This line is wholly unintelligible without a note. And we are afraid the note will be wholly incredible, unless the reader can fortunately procure the book to which it refers. In the *Part of a Letter*, which was published by Mr. Robt. Adair, in answer to Mr. Burke's *Letter to the D. of B.*, nothing is so remarkable as the studious imitation of Mr. Burke's style. His vehemence, and his passion, and his irony, his wild imagery, his far-sought illustrations, his rolling and lengthened

periods, and the short, quick, pointed sentences in which he often condenses as much wisdom and wit as others would expand through pages, or through volumes,—all these are carefully kept in view by his opponent, though not always very artificially copied or applied. But imitators are liable to be led strangely astray; and never was there an instance of a more complete mistake of a plain meaning, than that which this line is intended to illustrate—a mistake no less than that of a *coffin* for a *corpse*. This is hard to believe or to comprehend—but you shall hear. Mr. Burke, in one of his publications, had talked of the French "*unplumbing* the dead in order to destroy the living,"—by which he intended, without doubt, not metaphorically, but literally, "*stripping the dead of their* LEADEN COFFINS, *and then making them* (*not the* DEAD *but the* COFFINS) *into bullets.*" A circumstance perfectly notorious at the time the book was written. But this does not satisfy our author. He determines to retort Mr. Burke's own words upon him; and unfortunately "reaching at a metaphor," where Mr. Burke only intended a fact, he falls into the little mistake above mentioned, and by a stroke

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of his pen transmutes the illustrious Head of the house of Russell into a metal, to which it is not for us to say how near or how remote his affinity may possibly have been. He writes thus—"*If Mr. Burke had been content with 'unplumbing' a dead Russell, and hewing* HIM (observe—not the coffin, but HIM—the old dead Russell himself) *into grape and canister, to sweep down the whole generation of his descendants,*" *etc. etc.* The thing is scarcely credible; but IT IS SO! We write with the book open before us.'

The 'half a mission' to 'the Frozen Pole' is a gibe at a journey to St. Petersburg (1791), which Adair was supposed to have made at Fox's instance, with a view to concerting measures with the Empress and her Ministers to the prejudice of Pitt. Hence, too, the parody of *Non Usitata Nec Tenui Penna*, called *A Bit of an Ode to Mr. Fox*, which appeared in the Twelfth *Anti-Jacobin*:—

I mount, I mount into the sky,
Sweet bird, to *Pètersburg* I'll fly,
Or, if you bid, to *Paris.*
Fresh missions of the *Fox* and *Goose*
Successful Treaties may produce,
Though PITT in all miscarries.

'This idle story,' writes Adair, in an autograph statement prefixed to the *Life of Wilberforce* (London, 1838), and quoted by Mr. Charles Edmunds in his Edition (London, 1890) of the Poetry of *The Anti-Jacobin*— 'This idle story is here accredited by Mr. Wilberforce, and inserted by his sons, without due examination. It was grounded on a journey I made to Vienna and St. Petersburg in 1791. Dr. Prettyman [*sic*], Bishop of Winchester, in a work entitled *The Life of the Right Hon. William Pitt*, published by him in 1823, brought forward the fact of my having gone upon this journey as a criminal charge against Mr. Fox, who, as he pretends, sent me upon it with the intent of counteracting some negotiations then carrying on between Great Britain and Russia at St. Petersburg. I answered his accusation, I trust, successfully, in two letters published by Longman & Co. [*Two Letters from Mr. Adair to the Bp. of Winchester, in answer to the charge of a High Treasonable Misdemeanour brought by his Lordship against Mr. Fox and himself in his Life of the Rt. Hon. W. Pitt*, 8vo, 1821], and explained the circumstances which induced me in my travels in 1791 to visit the two capitals

Robert Adair

Robert Adair.

above mentioned.—ROBERT ADAIR, 1838.' The charge was first bruited by Edmund Burke, says Mr. Edmunds, in his *Letter on the Conduct of the Minority*, and was broached anew, as late as 1854, by Lord Malmesbury, in a speech to the Lords: when it was solemnly denied by Lord Campbell.

It remains to add of Adair that he wrote the 'Margaret Nicholson' and the 'Song of Scrutina' in *The Rolliad*, an account of his *Mission to the Court of Vienna* (1844) and *Negotiations for the Peace of the Dardanelles* (1845); married a daughter of the Marquis d'Hazincourt; and died in Chesterfield Street only eight years short of a hundred old.

Scrope Davies.

SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES, a Cambridge friend, went to Eton with Hodgson and Drury and the rest, and was afterwards, according to custom, a Fellow of King's. 'One of the cleverest men I ever knew, in conversation, was Scrope Berdmore Davies. Hobhouse is also very good in that line, though it is of less con-

sequence to a man who has other ways of showing his talents than in company. Scrope was always ready, and often witty—Hobhouse as witty but not so ready, being more diffident.'—*MS. Journal of Lord Byron* (MOORE). In the August of 1811 Byron made a will, in which he named Davies and Hobhouse his executors: the two to divide 'my library and furniture of every description.' On the 28th of the same month he executed a codicil, by which he revoked the bequest of his 'household goods and furniture, library, pictures, sabres, watches, plate, linen, trinkets, and other personal estate (except money and securities) situate within the walls of the mansion-house and premises at his decease—and bequeathed the same (except his wine and spirituous liquors) to his friends, the said J. C. Hobhouse, S. B. Davies, and Francis Hodgson, their executors, etc., to be equally divided between them for their own use;—and he bequeathed his wine and spirituous liquors, which should be in the cellars and premises at Newstead, unto his friend, the said J. Becher, for his own use, and requested the said J. C. Hobhouse, S. B. Davies, F. Hodgson, and J. Becher, respec-

Scrope Davies.

Scrope Davies.

tively, to accept the bequest therein contained to them respectively, as a token of his friendship.' A quaint and pleasing picture of Davies is painted (under date of March 28, 1814) in Byron's *MS. Journal* (MOORE) :—' Yesterday, dined *tête-à-tête* at the *Cocoa*, with Scrope Davies—sat from six till midnight—drank between us one bottle of champagne and six of claret, neither of which wines ever affect me. Offered to take Scrope home in my carriage; but he was tipsy and pious, and I was obliged to leave him on his knees praying to I know not what purpose or pagod. No headache, nor sickness. . . . I have heard nothing more from Scrope. Yesterday paid him four thousand eight hundred pounds, a debt of some standing, and which I wished to have paid before.' In 1814 Davies is one of the Drury Lane Committee, presents a share to Edmund Kean, and appears as a subscriber to the Testimonial Cup. And in 1816 he, with Hobhouse, visits Byron at Diodati. After which you find him 'giving very good accounts of his (Byron's) health and spirits' to Augusta, 'though he confesses he *found* him gloomy' (Mrs. Leigh to Hodgson, 29th October 1816); and about

the same time a generous inscription gives him *Parisina*. Scrope Davies.

According to Gronow (*Reminiscences*, Third Series), Davies, whom he describes as 'the life and soul of those who relished learning and genius and wit,' was a desperate gambler, and for some time played with equal daring and success. As a rule, he preferred the bank before the individual; but on one occasion, having departed from his custom, he fairly beggared his antagonist, and reduced him to despair, when, learning that nothing was left him in the world, he restored his winnings on the spot, on the other man's promise that he would play no more. After a while, however, 'fortune deserted her old favourite,' and, 'unable to mingle any longer with the rich, the giddy, and the gay,' he retired to Paris, where he had 'few intimates,' received those whom he wished to see on a bench in the Tuileries Gardens, and occupied himself with the composition of certain 'notes on the men of his time'—(he talked of them to Murray)—the MS. of which has disappeared. 'His manners and appearance,' says this writer, 'were of the true Brummell type': that is, 'there was nothing showy in his

Scrope Davies.

exterior.' A pun of his has got itself enbalmed in the true Byron :—

> 'When Brummell was obliged to retire to France, he knew no French, and having obtained a grammar for the purpose of study, our friend Scrope Davies was asked what progress Brummell had made in French; he responded, "that Brummell had been stopped, like Buonaparte in Russia, by the *elements*." I have put this pun into *Beppo, etc.*'—BYRON, *Diary*, 1821 :—

and a neat enough distich (on an amateur actor) is quoted in J. T. Hodgson's *Memoir* :—

> Not to be hissed delights the dunce,
> But who can hiss and groan at once?

In the same book you get the last of him, in a letter to Hodgson from Dr. Hawtrey :— 'I am sure you will be sorry to hear that our old friend Scrope Davies was found dead in his bed at Paris'—(2 Rue Miroménil)—'a few days since' (24th May 1852). 'He was a most agreeable and kind-hearted person, and I shall not soon forget the pleasant hours I have passed with him. He seemed quite broken down when I had a glimpse of him a few months since at Eton. I hardly knew him again, and should not have done so had he not mentioned his name.'

HOWE PETER BROWNE (1788-1845), Second Marquess of Sligo, was, like most of the men of his age, a patron of Pugilism, and in 1813, on the occasion of Tom Belcher's second fight with Dogherty, I find him giving five guineas at the ring-side towards a purse for the twice-beaten Irishman. Withal, he was something of an antiquary, and the vases, lachrymatories, and gold ornaments which he found in the tombs of Hellas were taken by him to Westport House, Westport, where they now are. To understand what follows, one must know that at Gibraltar he had joined Lady Hester Stanhope (1776-1829), then starting on that uncommon adventure which was to stamp her one of the most notable women of her time. At Gibraltar she had arrived with her brother, Captain Stanhope; but at Gibraltar Stanhope was ordered to rejoin his regiment, and either she must have turned back, or she must have come on alone, had not Michael Bruce—the Bruce who was to contrive the escape of Lavalette with Hutchinson and Sir Robert Wilson (1815)—undertaken to escort her on the perilous journey which

Marquess of Sligo.

Marquess of Sligo.

she had resolved to make through European Turkey. (*Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope. . . .* 'Narrated By Her Physician,' London, 1846, i. 4.) At the Piræus, adds the Physician, 'just as we were passing the mole-head, we saw a man jump from it into the sea, whom Lord Sligo recognised to be Lord Byron himself, and, hailing him, bade him hasten to dress and to come and join us.' The sequel may be told in Moore's own words:—'It was in the course, I believe, of their first interview, at his (Lord Sligo's) table, that Lady Hester, with that lively eloquence for which she is so remarkable, took the poet briskly to task for the depreciating opinion, which, as she understood, he entertained of all female intellect. Being but little inclined, were he even able, to sustain such a heresy, against one who was in her own person such an irresistible refutation of it, Lord Byron had no other refuge from the fair orator's arguments than in assent and silence; and this well-bred deference being, in a sensible woman's eyes, equivalent to concession, they became, from thenceforward, most cordial friends. In recalling some recollections of this period in his *Memoranda*, after relating the circum-

stance of his being caught bathing by an English party at Sunium, he added, "This was the beginning of the most delightful acquaintance which I formed in Greece." He then went on to assure Mr. Bruce, if ever those pages should meet his eyes, that the days they had passed together at Athens were remembered by him with pleasure.' Marquess of Sligo.

Further, Lord Sligo told Moore several anecdotes of Byron, which may here be reproduced. The first was recalled as a proof of the poet's consciousness of his beauty:—'He was a good deal weakened and thinned by his illness at Patras, and, on his return to Athens, standing one day before a looking-glass, he said to Lord Sligo—"How pale I look!—I should like, I think, to die of a consumption."—"Why of a consumption?" asked his friend. "Because then (he answered) the women would all say, 'See that poor Byron—how interesting he looks in dying!'"' The next is an anticipation of *The Deformed Transformed*:—'He spoke often of his mother . . . and with a feeling that seemed little short of aversion. "Some time or other," he said, "I will tell you *why* I feel thus

Marquess of Sligo.

towards her."—A few days after, when they were bathing together in the Gulf of Lepanto, he referred to this promise, and, pointing to his naked leg and foot, exclaimed—"Look there!—it is to her false delicacy at my birth I owe that deformity; and yet as long as I can remember, she has never ceased to taunt and reproach me with it. Even a few days before we parted, for the last time, on my leaving England, she, in one of her fits of passion, uttered an imprecation upon me, praying that I might prove as ill formed in mind as I am in body!" His look and manner, in relating this frightful circumstance, can be conceived only by those who have ever seen him in a similar state of excitement.' 'The little value,' Moore goes on to say, 'he had for those relics of ancient art, in pursuit of which he saw all his classic fellow-travellers so ardent, was, like everything he ever thought or felt, unreservedly avowed by him. Lord Sligo having it in contemplation to expend some money in digging for antiquities, Lord Byron, in offering to act as his agent . . . said—"You may safely trust *me*—I am no dilettante. Your connoisseurs are all thieves; but I care too

little for these things ever to steal them."' A profession of indifference which is fully confirmed by Galt. Marquess of Sligo.

JOSEPH BLACKETT (1786-1810), 'Cobbler Joe,' as Byron somewhere calls him, came eleventh in the family of twelve children born to a day labourer in the service of Sir John Lawson, at Tunstill, Yorks. In 1797 he went to London as apprentice to his brother (a shoemaker); married at eighteen; was a widower (with child) at twenty-one; was helped by a printer called Marchant, who set up his verses gratis, and introduced him to Pratt; published a book of *Specimens* (with Pratt to the front as editor and bear-leader) at twenty-three (1809); and died in the August of the next year at Seaham, in Northumberland, where, as the county historian puts it of this 'unfortunate child of genius,' his 'last days were soothed by the generous attention of the family of Milbanke.'—MOORE. See, too, *English Bards*:— Joseph Blackett.

> When some brisk youth, the tenant of a stall,
> Employs a pen less pointed than his awl,

Joseph Blackett.

Leaves his snug shop, forsakes his store of shoes,
St. Crispin quits, and cobbles for the Muse,
Heavens! how the vulgar stare! how crowds applaud!
How ladies read, and literati laud:—

with Byron's Note (1816):—'This was meant for poor Blackett, who was then patronised by A. J. B.; but *that* I did not know, or this would not have been written, at least I think not.' In a letter to Dallas, Byron writes of this same Blackett:—'Who would think that anybody would be such a blockhead as to sin against an express proverb:—Ne sutor ultra crepidam?

But spare him, ye Critics, his follies are past,
For the Cobbler is come, as he ought, to his *last*.

Which two lines, with a scratch under *last* to show where the joke lies, I beg that you will prevail on Miss Milbanke to have inserted on the tomb of her departed Blackett.'

Augusta Leigh.

AUGUSTA BYRON — Mrs. Shelley's 'Dowdy-Goody' — seems to have been born in 1784 — (the year of her mother's death; though Mr. Paget, in his admirable account of the Beecher-Stowe fiasco (*Blackwood*, January 1870: *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, London and Edinburgh,

1874), thinks that she may have been born as early as 1780)—and lived with her father at Chantilly, and with her father and stepmother at Chantilly and in Holles Street till the year of Byron's birth, when her grandmother, the once beautiful Dutch girl, now the Dowager-Countess of Holderness, took charge of her. This lady and the ingenuous Mrs. John Byron were not friends: so that it was not until after the Dowager-Countess's death that the brother and sister began to see and know each other. By that time Byron was a boy of fourteen; but to Augusta he was ever the 'Baby Byron' she had left in Holles Street. Henceforth, too, she was his best and staunchest friend, the one influence in his life that made steadily for good. 'Augusta,' he said at Genoa, 'knew all my weaknesses, yet had love enough to bear with them'; in fact, she 'but loved and pitied me the more because I was erring.' She never shrank from telling him the truth, nor from excepting to such of his acts and words as seemed to her to put him in the wrong; he left to her and her children whatever remained of his estate, after the performance of the trusts of his marriage settlement

Augusta Leigh.

Augusta Leigh.

—'in consequence of my dear wife Lady Byron and whatever children I may have otherwise amply provided for'; he cherished for her an unwavering regard, which found utterance in more than one immortal song. After the Marriage, Mrs. Leigh (she had been the wife of Colonel Leigh of the Tenth Huzzars since 1807) was received into high favour by her sister-in-law, was chosen to be her companion before and after her confinement, and became (in fact) the 'Goose' to Lady Byron's 'Pippin' and to Byron's 'Duck.' She did her utmost for both parties at the time of the Separation. 'To me,' said Byron to Lady Blessington, 'she was, in the hour of need, a tower of strength.' Indeed, 'her affection was my last rallying-point, and is now the only bright spot that the horizon of England offers to my view.' Still, when Byron went into Exile (1816), she remained on terms of the most affectionate intimacy with his wife, till the end (it would seem) of 1829, when Lady Byron's insistence in appointing to the vacant trusteeship of Byron's estate no less a person than the Stephen Lushington of the Separation—(who could scarce be expected to prove a *persona grata* to

Byron's sister)—led to a series of protests (Morrison Collection) from Mrs. Leigh, which the recipient either could not, or was anxious not, to brook. Thereafter, Byron's only child, the name-child, Augusta Ada, remained an entire stranger to her aunt; and the ill-matched sisters met no more till 1851—the year of Mrs. Leigh's death. It had been conveyed to her (it would seem) that Lady Byron had complained, and loudly, that but for Augusta's influence, Byron and she might have been reconciled; and this induced Mrs. Leigh to ask a meeting. Writing from Brighton (18th February 1851), 'I propose,' says Lady Byron, 'to meet you at the nearest convenient Hotel on this railway'; to 'hear *in Private* whatever you might have to say to me'; but 'should I, after hearing it, wish to make any observations, you must permit me to do so in the presence of a friend, who will accompany me.' The meeting—(which 'cannot but be one of suffering to me,' but . . . 'I think it right to make it')—took place under these conditions (the 'friend' was Frederick Robertson of Brighton) at the White Hart, Reigate. Mrs. Leigh's communication was simply to

Augusta Leigh.

Augusta Leigh.

the effect that such influence as she had had with her brother had ever been used to the advantage of his wife. 'Is that all?' said the other lady, who seems to have expected nothing less than a peculiar version of the story of Laon and Cythna. And, in writing to Mrs. Leigh (Brighton, April 12, 1851), after remarking that she (Lady B.) has 'done all in her power' to 'contribute to your peace of mind,' she 'remains under the afflicting persuasion that it is not to be attained by such means as you have taken.' The matter appears to end, so far as the world is concerned, with Mrs. Leigh's reply to this curious expression of self-righteousness :—

St. J. Palace, April 26, 1851.

I feel sure that you would not willingly be unjust, and therefore after much perplexing and deep consideration I have determined again to address you. My great wish for an interview with you arose partly from a secret desire to see you once more in this world, and still more to have the means of convincing you that accusations which I had reason to believe had been brought against me to you were unfounded, and at this, if only from the recollection of the affection that once subsisted between us, you cannot be surprised—I had not and never im-

plied that I had anything to reveal to you, with which *you* were not previously acquainted, on any other subject—nor can I at all express to you the regret I have felt ever since those words escaped you, showing that you imagined I had 'encouraged a bitterness of feeling in Lord Byron towards you.' I now as solemnly declare to you as if I were on my oath or on my death-bed that I never did so in any one instance, but that I *invariably* did the contrary—I have letters from him, and of my own to him (returned to me after his death) which would bear out this assertion, and I am ready at this, or any other moment, to make the most solemn asseveration of this, in any way that you can devise. I would willingly see your Friend Mr. Robertson, and afford him every proof of my veracity in my power. It was clear that he thought that I was keeping back communications that ought to be made to you, and as your confidential friend, it would be comfort to me to talk openly with him on such points as might tend to convince you of the truth of what I now say—and without which the remainder of my life will be still more unhappy than the miseries, of various kinds, which surround me must inevitably make me. Augusta Leigh.

She died at the end of this same year; but Lady Byron, whether or not she had, as Paget insists, and it is generally believed, she had, talked Laon-and-Cythna under seal

Augusta Leigh. to Lushington, lived to talk and think it ten years longer.

John Murray. JOHN MURRAY (1778-1843) was the son of John M'Murray (John I. 1745-1793), who threw up a commission in the Marines to turn bookseller at 32 Fleet Street, where, under the style and title of John Murray, he succeeded Paul Sandby. John II. was but fifteen when his father died; but he had uncommon energy and intelligence; he made some fortunate ventures; and by the time he was thirty or so he had planned and launched *The Quarterly Review*, with Gifford as editor, and Scott and Heber, Canning and George Ellis, for contributors. It was so instant a success that it was everywhere accepted as the official Tory organ, and the shop in Fleet Street—(it was not till 1812 that John II. took over Miller's place in Albemarle Street, and became the 'Emperor of the West')—was soon a veritable literary centre. Murray was Publisher to the Admiralty and the Board of Longitude; but there is no department of letters in which he did not make and leave his mark.

Among his authors were Henry Hallam, Lockhart (the *Scott* and the *Burns*), Campbell (*Specimens of the British Poets*), Richard Ford, 'Aristophanes' Mitchell, Plumer Ward, Crabbe, Lord Mahon, Prior (*Life of Goldsmith*), Sir John Barrow, Sir John Malcolm, Heber, Southey, Lord Rosse, Sir Humphrey Davy, Sir George Back, Greig, Sir George Head, Walter Scott, Morier (*Hajji Baba*), Hope (*Anastasius*), Washington Irving, Napier, Mme. de Staël, Wellington, Lady Caroline Lamb, Croker (Boswell's *Johnson*), George Borrow, Sir Edward Parry, Sir Alexander Burness, 'Monk' Lewis, Sir John Franklin, Malthus (*Essay on the Principle of Population*), Faraday, Babbage, Fanny Kemble, Mrs. Trollope, Carême (*The Art of French Cookery*), 'Nimrod,' Benjamin Disraeli (*Contarini Fleming* and *Gallomania*), and Mr. W. E. Gladstone (*The State in its Relation with the Church*)—to name but these. 'Tis a brilliant gathering; but its *raisons d'etre* are conspicuous. 'I believe'—thus John II. to Napier, to whom he had offered £500 for the first volume of the *Peninsular War*—'I believe that you will not find it is in my character to make any

John Murray.

John Murray.

ungenerous offer for a valuable work'; and he did himself the barest justice in the assumption. He gave Crabbe £3000 for a set of copyrights, whose interest was on the wane, and which the Longmans had refused to reconsider—and lost £1500 or so by the bargain. Washington Irving's *Columbus* and *Granada* cost him nearly £8800, which represented a deficit of £2250. To Moore, for the *Life* of Byron, he paid some £4800 in cash; and in 1831 he stood to lose £300 on the first issue, 'even if the whole were sold.' But if he lost with one hand, he gained with the other. By 1838 Mrs. Rundell's *Art of Cookery*:—

> Along thy shelves in order shine
> The works thou deemest most divine,
> The Art of Cookery, and mine,
> My Murray:—

an early venture of his, had gone through sixty editions; the circulation of the *Quarterly* ranged between nine and twelve thousand copies; his interest in Byron alone must have been literally golden. For he was sagacious as well as daring. The business (so he held) of 'a publishing bookseller' lay in his brains—not in his shop; and if he endured a loss of £26,000 in the

matter of *The Representative*—(the ill-starred daily print which was the first in time and the worst in fortune of Benjamin Disraeli's many enterprises)—he had the rectitude and the good sense to retire from business with Constable and the Ballantynes; so that when the crash came, he was able, not only to meet it with composure, but also, to stand to the rescue of some fellow-traders who must have gone under but for his hand. His authors, too,—and we have seen what manner of men they were—were his personal friends. He had the gift of wearing, as well as the trick of winning. And he passed the greater part of a long, laborious, honourable life on equal terms and in constant association with the best of his time. John Murray.

It was in 1811, while John II. was still in Fleet Street, that Dallas took him the MS. of the First and Second *Harold*; and this was the beginning of a connexion which, though it was interrupted by his refusal to publish *Don Juan* from the Sixth Canto onwards, was in the end resumed, and was throughout an advantage and a pleasure to both the parties. Poet and publisher were soon on the best possible terms. As his letters show, to nobody

John Murray.

did Byron write with a finer felicity or a more abounding spirit than he wrote to Murray; while as for Murray, his regard for Byron was confessed not merely in big prices —(which he could afford to pay, and which were simply Byron's due)—but in a hundred little friendly offices, in a constant care for Byron's interest and Byron's fame, and in a series of letters (for which see Dr. Smiles's *Memoir, passim*), which show that the writer was never so happy as in seeking to make his correspondent happy by the transmission of good news, or a good book, or good words from an admirer or a friend. For the business relations between the two, enough to say that, roughly speaking, Murray produced everything that Byron wrote, with the exception of *English Bards*, the *Vision*, the *Hours*, the *Age of Bronze*, and the last cantos (eleven) of *Don Juan* (all which he bought of the Executors at a cost of £3885); that, besides what he gave Dallas for the First and Second *Harold* and *The Giaour* (£1125 in all), he paid to Byron nearly £15,000 in hard cash; that he purchased the MS. *Memoir* of Moore for £2100, and had decided to destroy it, and to be at a loss of the purchase-money, when

the matter was taken out of his hands; that in answer to Leigh Hunt's attack on Byron's memory he commissioned Moore to prepare the *Life and Letters* (1830), himself contributing a good half of the matter, agreed to pay him four thousand guineas for the work, and in the long-run paid him £600 more; and that in 1837 he produced the annotated edition of the *Poems* which, in one or other of its forms, has been hitherto the sole complete Byron to be had. Murray, in fact, was Byron's publisher, even as Byron was Murray's poet; and to dissociate their several names and fames would, now or ever, be impossible.

John Murray.

THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852) was the son of a Dublin (Catholic) Grocer; was educated at Sheridan's old school—(Mr. Whyte's: 'I was long his favourite *show*-scholar')—and at Trinity College, Dublin—'after the memorable act of 1793, was one of the first of the young Helots of the land, who hastened to avail themselves of the privilege of being educated at their country's university'; at fourteen, or less, was writing for the *Anthologia*, a local

Thomas Moore.

Thomas Moore.

magazine, in which he read *The Pleasures of Memory*; at fifteen began the practice of political satire at the mock-court (Dalkey) of King Stephen (Armytage), a singing pawnbroker; at nineteen came to London to read law at the Middle Temple; and before he was twenty-one had published (1800) a translation (as it were into scented soap) of the *Odes* of Anacreon, which was dedicated—through his earliest patron, Lord Moira, afterwards First Marquess of Hastings—to the Prince of Wales, and which (with his own excellent talent as an actor and singer) gave him the run of the very choicest Whig Society. It was followed (1801) by *The Poetical Works of the late Thomas Little, Esq.*—a gentleman who 'died in his one-and-twentieth year'; who had 'given much of his time to the study of the amatory writers'; and whose works were (therefore) 'all the productions of an age when the passions very often give a colouring too warm to the imagination'; and in 1803 Lord Moira got him made Registrar to the Admiralty Court at Bermuda. He had looked for better patronage, but he was ever a man to make the best of things, and he made the best of

this one. That is, he went to Bermuda, found and engaged a Deputy, travelled in Canada:— Thomas Moore.

Faintly as tolls the evening chime,
Our voices keep tune, and our oars keep time. . . .
Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast,
The rapids are near and the daylight's past :—

and the United States; returned to England; published his *Odes and Epistles* (1806); and in 1807 began the *Irish Melodies* (Part x., 1834), which he sang with rare and peculiar art, which were long worth £500 a year to him, which are still singing here and there, and which, as translated by Gounet, and set to music by no less a man than Hector Berlioz, had, like the twice or thrice translated *Epicurean*, a certain part in the Romantic Renaissance of 1830. In 1811 he married, and in 1812 he published *The Twopenny Post-Bag*, and became Avenger-General to the Whigs, who were fresh from the Great Disappointment of 1811, and who exulted in his effect, whether he wept over a false and fallen Prince in an *Irish Melody* :—

When first I met thee, warm and young,
There shone such truth about thee,
And on thy lip such promise hung
I did not dare to doubt thee,
But go, deceiver, go, etc. :—

Thomas Moore.

or took note (in *The Morning Chronicle* or *The Times*) of the run of things at Lady Hertford's :—

> The house where you know
> There 's such good mutton cutlets and strong curaçoa :—

in Manchester Square, and gibed the wigs and stays and whiskers, the moral obliquities and the physical rotundities, in evidence at Carlton House. In 1817 he published *Lalla Rookh*; for the copyright of which he received three thousand guineas; which he dedicated to Samuel Rogers from 'His very grateful and Affectionate Friend'; and whose vogue was so instant and so far-wandered that Luttrell was soon able to address him thus :—

> I 'm told, dear Moore, your lays are sung
> (Can it be true, you lucky man ?)
> At midnight in the Persian tongue
> Along the streets of Ispahan.

In 1818 he went to Paris (with Rogers), and there produced that excellent set of pasquils, the first *Fudge Family*. Meanwhile the Deputy at Bermuda was found to have defaulted to the tune of £6000, and, to escape arrest, Moore went abroad, travelled in Italy—(he stayed a few days

at Venice with Byron, who gave him the MS. *Memoir*)—and then, retracing his steps, set up his rest in Paris, where he abode till, having compromised his debt to the Exchequer for £1000, he returned to England: there to publish his *Loves of the Angels* (1823), his *Captain Rock* (1824), his *Sheridan* (1825), his *Epicurean* (1827), his *Byron* (1830), and his *Lord Edward Fitzgerald* (1831), to say nothing of innumerable lyrics and pasquinades. In 1835 he was put on the Civil List for a pension of £300; but his last years were miserable enough. For all the smirk in his love-songs and the sting (as of nettles) in his satire, he was a worthy and magnanimous little man—the best of sons, the most devout among husbands (he was horribly scandalised, you learn from his *Diary*, by the Marianna Segati business at Venice, and not less so by the sketch of Donna Inez in *Don Juan*), the most affectionate of fathers; and, having lost his only daughter in her girlhood, he was doomed to see the death of his second son (by consumption) at the very threshold of what promised to be an honourable career, and to watch the ruin of his heir, who ended, as one of the

Thomas Moore.

Thomas Moore.

Foreign Legion, in an Algerine hospital. Such gleams of happiness as were his came through his countrymen, who wore him, tinsel and all, in their heart of hearts, and never failed to greet him with just such ovations (in terms of whisky and sentiment) as the Modern Scot reserves for the immortal memory of Burns. In the long-run his mind decayed: by 1847 he was 'sinking' (so he wrote to Rogers) 'into a mere vegetable,' and in reading of the end your sole feeling is one of regret that it came so late and took so long. As to his personal qualities, a single testimony, being Sir Walter's, will suffice:—'It would be a delightful addition to life,' he wrote in 1825, 'if Thomas Moore had a cottage within two miles of me.' For his poetry, it is the fashion to decry him; and it is a fact that his *Lalla Rookh* and his *Loves of the Angels* (a mild Whig Paradise done by a tame, suburban Byron) are glittering and 'conceited' enough to look tawdry, at the same time that they are so clever, and so breathless in their cleverness, as to be extremities of hard reading. But none in this century has surpassed him as a writer of light, brilliant, and scarifying insolence; while he was a master of cadence, and his

songs—as *Bendemeer's Stream*, as *At the Mid-Hour of Night*, as *Doth Not a Meeting*, to name no more—have a rhythmical quality, at once exquisite and simple, for which you may quest in vain among the Minors of to-day. Thomas Moore.

For his connexion with Byron: it began in 1812, under such circumstances as are set forth below. It was said of him that he 'dearly loved a lord'; but to love a lord was in those days no crime—especially in an earnest Whig; and Sir Walter, albeit a fine, unalterable Tory, was no more averse from aristocratic intimacies than (to slide to the lowest rung of the ladder) the Radical Leigh Hunt. In any case, Moore had kept the company of peers—Moira, Lansdowne, Holland, and the like—since his *début* in 1800; and it is fair to argue that he was at least as strongly attracted by Byron's temperament and Byron's genius as he was touched by Byron's barony. It is possible—even probable—that Mr. Fraser Rae is justified in saying that he was jealous of Sheridan: like himself an Irishman, a commoner like himself, and like himself—but to far more splendid purpose than himself—a practical and social success. But

Thomas Moore.

in Byron's case there were no grounds for spleen; for Byron, who recognised him instantly, and was ever his admirer and his friend, was not less manifestly his superior in poetry and genius than he was his superior by birth and fortune. In any event, it is certain that his attitude towards his 'noble friend' (which being mannerly and correct, was Shelley's phrase and Scott's), while cordial in the extreme, was never (that I can see) unduly subservient. He received the dedication of *The Corsair* with a vast deal of pride ('They may say,' he wrote to Power, 'that the praise is laid on with a trowel, but at least it is a golden trowel that lays it on'); but he gave nothing in return for it but his very mediocre *Fables for the Holy Alliance* (1823). He accepted the MS. *Memoir* gratefully, but without humility—as a gift from friend to friend; and he did his best for his friend's sake to keep at least a part of it for posterity. He avenged the memory of 'a late noble Lion' on a certain 'small puppy dog' (see *post*, p. 150) with exemplary thoroughness. He took up the work of writing the *Life* with such an independence of mind that he began by making himself hateful to the

Lady-Byronites, and went on to scandalise the opposite faction in the end. In brief, I cannot find that (even in his revolts in the character of a 'Domestic Man') he was ever other than loyal to a friendship which was one of the best things of his life. Thomas Moore.

For the occasion of its beginning we must go back to 1806, and thence onward to 1809 and the publication of *English Bards*. In the former year, the Irish poet, exasperated by the strictures which Jeffrey had passed in verses, challenged his critic to the arbitrament of mortal combat. The would-be duellists met at Chalk Farm—(they took a fancy to each other on the ground)—but the affair had taken wind (through William Spencer and Lord Fincastle) and they were arrested. Now Jeffrey's friend was that Francis Horner whom Sir Walter likened to Father Shandy's bull, and on him devolved the deadly work of loading the tools. He was far too serious and too highly cultured a Whig to know anything about firearms; and when the pistols were examined at Bow Street, it was found that one had a bullet in it, but the other had not. Then 'Enter Rumour' —on this occasion, as on many others, 'an Irish Journalist'—'painted full of tongues,'

Thomas Moore.

all holloaing that the pistols held no bullets. 'In consequence of this,' says Moore, 'I was induced to write a letter to the editor of one of the Journals'—'almost all' had gone with Rumour—'contradicting the falsehood that had been circulated, and stating briefly the real circumstances of the case.' This contradiction Byron did not see; and in *English Bards* he took it on him to tell the tale, in prose and verse, as the world loved to hear it told:—

> Can none remember that eventful day,
> That ever glorious, almost fatal fray,
> When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
> And Bow Street myrmidons stood laughing by?

'In 1806 Messrs. Jeffrey and Moore met at Chalk Farm. The duel was prevented by the interference of the magistracy; and, on examination, the balls of the pistols were found to have evaporated. This incident gave occasion to much waggery in the daily prints.' The First Edition of *English Bards* was anonymous; but to the Second (published in the summer of the same year) Byron put his name. This at the time Moore did not know; but when at last he learned who had belittled him, he put on

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his best duelling manner, and thus addressed his adversary :— Thomas Moore.

DUBLIN, *January* 1, 1810.

MY LORD,—Having just seen the name of 'Lord Byron' prefixed to a work entitled *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which, as it appears to me, *the lie is given* to a public statement of mine, respecting an affair with Mr. Jeffrey some years since, I beg you will have the goodness to inform me whether I may consider your Lordship as the author of this publication.

I shall not, I fear, be able to return to London for a week or two; but, in the meantime, I trust your Lordship will not deny me the satisfaction of knowing whether you avow the insult contained in the passages alluded to.

It is needless to suggest to your Lordship the propriety of keeping our correspondence secret.—I have the honour to be, your Lordship's very humble servant, THOMAS MOORE.

22 Molesworth Street.

Byron, however, had gone abroad, and the letter got no further than Hodgson, who promised—but failed—to send it on to him. Byron returned to England in 1811, as we have seen; and in the interval Moore had (as he puts it) 'taken upon himself obligations, both as husband and father, which make most men—and especially those

Thomas Moore.

who have nothing to bequeath—less willing to expose themselves to danger.' All the same, the Note to the 'leadless pistol' couplet rankled, and he resolved to have it out—as peaceably as might be—with its noble author. 'The death of Mrs. Byron,' he remarks, 'for some time delayed my purpose. But as soon after that event as was consistent with decorum, I addressed a letter to Lord Byron, in which, referring to my former communication, and expressing some doubts as to its having ever reached him, I restated, in pretty nearly the same words, the nature of the insult, which, as it appeared to me, the passage in his note was calculated to convey. "It is now useless," I continued, "to speak of the steps with which it was my intention to follow up that letter. The time which has elapsed since then, though it has done away neither the injury nor the feeling of it, has, in many respects, materially altered my situation; and the only object which I have now in writing to your Lordship is to preserve some consistency with that former letter, and to prove to you that the injured feeling still exists, however circumstances may compel me to be deaf to its

dictates at present. When I say 'injured feeling,' let me assure your Lordship that there is not a single vindictive sentiment in my mind towards you. I mean but to express that uneasiness, under (what I consider to be) a charge of falsehood, which must haunt a man of any feeling to his grave, unless the insult be retracted or atoned for; and which, if I did *not* feel, I should, indeed, deserve far worse than your Lordship's satire could inflict upon me." In conclusion I added, that so far from being influenced by any angry or resentful feeling towards him, it would give me sincere pleasure if, by any satisfactory explanation, he would enable me to seek the honour of being henceforward ranked among his acquaintance.' Thomas Moore.

SAMUEL ROGERS (1763-1855) was poet, wit, banker; author of *The Pleasures of Memory* (1792), *The Voyage of Columbus* (1812), *Jacqueline* (published with *Lara*, 1814), *Italy* (1822-28), etc. Rich as he was, he never married. He was content to give the best breakfasts in London; to speak bitterly and give generously (Campbell Samuel Rogers.

Samuel Rogers.

said :—'Borrow five hundred pounds of Rogers, and he will never say a word against you till you want to repay him'); to patronise the arts and to write, with the most careful and fastidious pen in history —(the *Columbus* took him fourteen years to write, the *Pleasures* seven, and the *Italy* fifteen)—book after book of verses which are still enjoyable, howbeit a little as wax flowers are decorative, and to which, in the end, he fitted (at a cost of £15,000) over a hundred designs by Turner and Stothard, renowned among the masterpieces of English illustration. Byron, who to be sure was no critic, thought the world of him ('the Tithonus of poesy, immortal already'), as we shall see as we go on. But perhaps his best work is a certain epigram :—

> They say Ward has no heart, but I deny it;
> He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it.

In 1812 Byron dedicated *The Giaour* to him, and he lived to accept the dedication of *Master Humphrey's Clock* and to decline (1850) the Laureateship, and so make way for Tennyson.

Rogers wrote nobly enough of Byron in

his *Italy*; and Byron, though at Genoa he likened Rogers's achievement to an *hortus siccus*, was generally lavish of regard for 'the father of present poesy.' Remains that achievement in satire, the famous *Question and Answer* which, as I think, might have been dictated by the Devil:— Samuel Rogers.

> Nose and chin would shame a knocker,
> Wrinkles that would puzzle Cocker,
> Mouth which marks the envious scorner,
> With a scorpion in each corner, etc.

It was published in *Fraser* (January 1833). I have somewhere read (I forget where) that, on the occasion of a visit from Rogers, Byron, who was excellent at what is called 'chaff,' not only gave his guest a riotous reception, but slipped this ferocious caricature of him, this Gillray-Daumier (so to speak) under his pillow. That it was done in jest is evident. As evident is it that Rogers, despite those grave and generous verses in the *Italy*, lived to resent it, and resent it bitterly. This if we may believe—and I see no reason why we may not—the late Charles Mackay. Talking with Rogers one day, he praised Byron, as a young man would; and Rogers as steadily dispraised. Says Mackay:—'You will at least acknow-

Samuel Rogers.

ledge, sir, that he had fire.' And to him Rogers:—'Yes, *hell*-fire.' With which remark the elegant, ambitious, careful poetaster disappears.

Robert Southey.

THE *Curse of Kehama* (1810) was the fourth, I believe, of those 'epics' whose frequent occurrence had already made Byron write (in *English Bards*) of a very worthy man but an extremely long-winded versifier, the 'BALLADMONGER SOUTHEY' (1774-1843):—

> To him let Camoens, Milton, Tasso yield,
> Whose annual strains, like armies, take the field:—

and even long afterwards to make him write again (in *Don Juan*):—

> I know that what our neighbours call '*longueurs*,'
> (We've not so good a *word*, but have the *thing*,
> In that complete perfection which insures
> An epic from Bob Southey every spring—)
> Form not the true temptation which allures
> The reader.

At the present time of writing, Byron did in nowise hate his Southey: he did but laugh at Southey's so-called poetry, of which, by the way, the writer was inordinately vain ('I was perfectly aware,' he wrote to Murray of *Kehama*, 'that I was planting

acorns, while other men were setting Turkey beans. The oak will grow,' etc.). Of Southey the man he knew nothing till 1813, when they met at Holland House. This was in September; and some two months after (November 22) Byron writes in his *Journal* thus:—'Southey, I have not seen much of. His appearance is *Epic*; and he is the only existing entire man of letters. All the others have some pursuit annexed to their authorship. His manners are mild, but not those of a man of the world, and his talents of the first order. His prose is perfect. Of his poetry there are various opinions: there is, perhaps, too much of it for the present generation;—posterity will probably select. He has *passages* equal to anything. At present, he has a *party*, but no *public*—except for his prose writings. The *Life of Nelson* is beautiful.' Robert Southey.

But Southey, who, as young men will, had started life as a Republican, and in that character had written tragedies of *Wat Tyler* (1794) and *Inscriptions* in Martin the Regicide his honour:—

> Dost thou ask his Crime?
> He had rebelled against his king,
> And sat in judgment on him:—

Robert Southey.

had turned with time into so hardened and so militant a Tory that, when 'Poetical Pye' departed the world in this same year, he was chosen, Scott having said no in the interval, to wear the widowed wreath. Now, Byron was an aristocrat and an individual Radical; besides, thus to forswear yourself was not his way; and his references to Southey were for some time contemptuous enough. Still, for signs of positive and violent enmity we have to wait till the first years of the Exile, with the report, which Byron believed the Laureate to have set going in London, that at Geneva he and Shelley had 'formed a league of incest with two sisters,' Mary Godwin (1797-1851), that is, and Jane Clairmont (1797-1879), who was presently to become the mother of Allegra:—this the daughter of William Godwin (1756-1836) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), that the daughter of William Godwin's second wife, the widow Clairmont, or Clements, whom he married in 1801. It was a piece of malignant gossip, picked up at a Genevese hotel; but under the circumstances it was not at all unnatural. Byron, deserted by his wife, 'accused of every monstrous vice by public rumour and by private rancour,' had

been fairly vomited by English society; Shelley, notoriously an atheist and a free-thinker in matters sexual, had left his wife for a woman with whom he was living in open adultery; and, while both the ladies were young and pretty, which made things bad, both the ladies were whole or parcel Godwin, which made things worse, for had not Mr. Godwin's first wife vindicated the Rights of Women? and had not Godwin himself declined all laws, and especially the marriage law, 'the worst of all'? None the less, Byron was, very naturally, exasperated by it; and one effect of the information that Southey was responsible for its introduction to talking England was that achievement in assault, the 'Dedication' (1818) suppressed, to Byron's chagrin, of the First and Second *Don Juan*. This, however, was very far from being the end. In 1819 appeared three cantos more, and Southey, in putting forth his ridiculous *Vision of Judgment*, attached to it an appropriate preface in which he opined that the poignancy of a deathbed repentance would nothing avail the author of such 'lascivious' stuff, talked of that author's 'Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety,' and hinted that here

Robert Southey.

Robert Southey.

was a case for the Law. Byron retorted in his most savage and most scornful vein, remarking (truly enough), among other things, that there was 'something at once ludicrous and blasphemous in this arrogant scribbler of all work sitting down to deal damnation and destruction upon his fellow-creatures, with *Wat Tyler*, the Apotheosis of George the Third, and the Elegy on Martin the Regicide, all shuffled together in his writing-desk.' Southey, no more disposed than his antagonist to turn his cheek to the smiter, addressed a letter to *The London Courier* (5th January 1822), in which he explicitly denied that he had 'scattered abroad calumnies, knowing them to be such, against Lord Byron and others'; gloried in his attack on the Satanic School; defended himself with spirit and effect against the charge of being a scribbler of all work; protested that he had stuck the name of the author of *Don Juan* upon the gibbet, for reproach and infamy as long as it should endure; and ended by counselling Byron to 'attack him in rhyme' or not at all. Byron's reply was twofold. He challenged Southey, through Douglas Kinnaird; and he finished that *Vision of*

Judgment, which is, by common consent, one of the master satires of the world. Of the challenge Southey never heard (Kinnaird suppressed it) till its author was dead; but he read the *Vision* in the first number of *The Liberal* that very year, and he must certainly have known that he shared with Brougham the very doubtful honour of being contemned and hated till the very end. Robert Southey.

To end *con la bocca dolce*, here is a touch of fun from Medwin's *Journal* (1824):—'On my calling on Lord Byron one morning, he produced *The Deformed Transformed*. Handing it to Shelley, he said—"Shelley, I have been writing a Faustish kind of drama: tell me what you think of it." After reading it attentively, Shelley returned it. "Well," said Lord B., "how do you like it?" "Least," replied he, "of anything I ever saw of yours. It is a bad imitation of *Faust*, and besides, there are two entire lines of Southey's in it." Lord Byron changed colour immediately, and asked hastily, "What lines?" Shelley repeated,

> "And water shall see thee,
> And fear thee, and flee thee.

They are in *The Curse of Kehama*." His

Robert Southey.

Lordship instantly threw the poem into the fire. He seemed to feel no chagrin at seeing it consume—at least his countenance betrayed none, and his conversation became more gay and lively than usual. Whether it was hatred of Southey, or respect for Shelley's opinion,' etc.

William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley.

WILLIAM POLE TYLNEY LONG WELLESLEY (1788-1857) was afterwards (1845) Fourth Earl of Mornington. The story of this 'most distinguished Briton' is one so full of insolence, adultery, thriftlessness, and the right Regency feeling for blackguardism and the Establishment, that I cannot choose but tell it with a certain particularity. In 1812, after a pursuit which itself was something of a scandal, he married Catherine, eldest daughter and co-heir of Sir James Tylney Long, Bart., of Draycot, Wilts, whose names he added to his own, and thus inspired a delicious line in *Rejected Addresses* :—

Long may Long Tilney Wellesley Long Pole live!

The lady had some £40,000 a year (her pin-money ran to £13,000) and Wellesley had

nothing; but 'the ancient and approved servants' of the Tylney family were dismissed at once, and in the March of 1813 there was tried at Chelmsford the case of 'The King *v.* Wellesley Pole Tylney Long Wellesley.' This was an action to try the right of the public to a way through Wanstead Park, and in the course of it Mr. Serjeant Shepherd, who was briefed for the defence, protested strongly against the right of common people to 'offend his (Pole's) princely mansion with the passage of unseemly vehicles.' In truth, the man was born magnificent; his life was of a piece throughout; he kept open house and a sumptuous table, had the finest hounds and horses on the country-side, retained an hundred and fifty servitors in Lincoln green, would have nothing but guineas in his pockets, and all the rest of it; and by 1821 he was in such straits that in 1822 he had to take his wife abroad (tradition says that he dodged the traps in a boat, and boarded the packet far out at sea). They were living at Naples when (in 1823) they met a certain Captain Bligh, of the Coldstream Guards, and his wife Helena (*née* Paterson), both of whom they had known in

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England. In the July of that year Mrs. Bligh left her husband's house in consequence of an intrigue with Wellesley; but Wellesley filed an affidavit of denial before the British Vice-Consul, and persuaded Mrs. Wellesley to offer the injured lady the protection of her roof. This she did, but at Florence she had to turn the injured lady out of the house. From Italy the Wellesleys went to Paris (1824), whither Mrs. Bligh had preceded them; and from Paris Mrs. Wellesley wrote to her father-in-law (Lord Maryborough, a most respectable man: elder brother to the Duke of Wellington, Master of the Mint in 1815, Master of the Buckhounds in 1828), that, if Wellesley would have done with Mrs. Bligh, she would forgive the man 'his profligate and unprincipled conduct,' and provide for the woman out of her own income. Lord and Lady Maryborough went to Paris and did their best; but it was to no purpose; so that Mrs. Wellesley took her children to England, and in the June of 1825 began to sue for a divorce in the Ecclesiastical Court. About that time, too, Wellesley and Mrs. Bligh, who had been playing at man and wife in divers *gîtes* in France and

Holland, crossed to London; and on July 7 Wellesley drove Bligh to his wife's house in Clarges Street, for the purpose of getting hold of one or more of his children. He entered the house, when Bligh drove round to Mme. Vestris's, there to wait the event; but Mrs. Wellesley heard his voice, escaped (with her daughter) by the kitchen door, served him with a citation for divorce, and filed a bill in Chancery to make her children wards of the Court, after which the errant couple scuttled back to France. In the September of that year Mrs. Wellesley died, enjoining her sisters, the Misses Long, to resist to the utmost any attempt on Wellesley's part to remove the children; and in 1827—(in which year he had to pay swingeing damages to Captain Bligh, as defendant in a suit for *crim. con.*)—Wellesley brought an action against their guardian, his uncle Wellington, to recover possession of them. In delivering judgment, the Chancellor (Eldon) remarked that they had it in evidence that in July 1824 Wellesley had 'a venereal tumour removed from his eye by Dr. Southcote'; that Southcote had sworn that, to his knowledge, Wellesley when in Paris got blackguard children to come to

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the back of the house to teach his children to blaspheme; that Mr. Pitman, the tutor of Wellesley's choice, testified that he had 'heard the eldest infant plaintiffs use some very disgusting expressions, and utter the most coarse and vulgar oaths in French,' and the boy William, being rebuked for his obscenities, had replied that 'his father liked it'; that a letter of Wellesley's was before the Court (dated February 9, 1825) containing such phrases as 'If the fellow be a sportsman, . . . damn his infernal soul to hell'; that in another letter he bade his boys to 'study hard, but as soon as you have completed your tasks, go out in all weathers, and play hell and tommy—make as much riot as your tongues can admit—chase cats, dogs, and women, old and young, but spare my game'; and that Dr. Bulkeley, the physician who attended the Wellesleys at Naples, and who afterwards resided and travelled with them, had sworn that W. P. L. Wellesley said, in the presence of his children, 'Debauch all the women you meet with, young and old':—For all which reasons he, Eldon, would 'deserve to be hunted out of society if he hesitated for one moment to say, that he would sooner forfeit

his life than permit the girl Victoria to go in the company of such a woman, or into the care and protection of a man who had the slightest connexion with that woman.' With incredible magnificence the Plaintiff returned to the charge and published *Two Letters to the Right Hon. Earl Eldon, Lord Chancellor, etc. etc. etc., with official and other documents and additional notes.* 'By the Hon. W. L. Wellesley. Third Edition. London: John Miller, Pall Mall, 1827.' His defence—'If shape that can be called which shape hath none'—is monumental. His wife, he says, 'was a most amiable woman . . . but she had not profited by education to the degree that might have been expected,' and that her letters were mostly written by her lady's-maid. He throws the blame on her sisters, who 'entertain principles and doctrines hostile to the Established Church.' The real cause of dislike is revealed elsewhere: it is that 'a few years after my marriage I was called upon to pay the young ladies their portions'—£15,000 each, *plus* interest—'making the whole amount to nearly £40,000.' He further contends that during Mrs. Wellesley's minority, and afterwards, she gave

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'very large sums of money' (a commodity he could properly appreciate) to Lady Catherine and the Misses Long. But it was understood that the Misses Long:—and be it remembered that 'sectarian troubles have operated upon the minds of the elder sister . . . to such a degree that it can scarcely be called rational'; while 'the younger, to a temper the most violent, adds manners the least refined':—should transfer their portions, charged on the Long estates, to himself and wife. The Longs, it would seem, were Methodists, and Wellesley, a pillar of the Establishment, hated Methodism, as Sir Andrew hated a Puritan. The ladies, in fact, had sat too sedulously at the feet of one Barry, sometime resident apothecary to Sir James Long:—'A man of sectarian principles, and a great collector of sectarian tracts (it was tracts of this nature which I was in the habit of burning after my marriage; not because they were religious, but because they were wild, fanatic, and not in accordance with the true spirit of Christianity) with which he supplied the different members of the family,' etc. etc. etc. Barry, by the way, had made himself still more obnoxious to this sound Church-

man by proposing that the Long estates should, in the event of there being no male issue of the Wellesley-Long marriage, be re-settled on the Misses Long, the defender of the true faith to receive an annuity of £10,000. William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley.

In 1828 Wellesley married 'the daughter of Colonel Paterson and *widow* of Captain Bligh of the Coldstream Guards' (*The Times*, 4th July 1857). But, to quote the same authority, this second union 'would appear to have been no better assorted than the first, to judge from the fact that, since her husband's accession to the title, Lady Mornington has repeatedly appeared in our columns as an applicant for relief at the metropolitan police-courts in consequence of having been left destitute by her husband, and chargeable to the parish.' In the end the old blood died of heart disease; and on 4th July 1857 an inquest was held (by Mr. Wakely) at the Coachmakers' Arms, Bentinck Street, Manchester Square:—'Dr. Probert, the Earl's medical man, said the late Earl had been very badly off so far as pecuniary affairs were concerned, and until the last two years had wanted the necessaries of life. . . . Major W. J. Richardson,

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a friend of the Earl, said he did not consider that he [the Earl] had been lately in pecuniary want, for his cousin, the Duke of Wellington, allowed him £10 a week': which, to be sure, was little enough 'for a man who once had £100,000 a year.'

John Galt.

IN 1809 GALT, who had left Greenock and the Custom House for London and Letters (he had the usual tragedy in his pocket) as early as 1804, was obliged, for his health's sake, to go South. At Gibraltar one day, 'in a withering levanter,' which confined him to the library, he saw Byron, and noted, without knowing who he was, the 'neatness and simplicity,' and at the same time the 'peculiarity of style,' which distinguished his attire, the fact that his 'physiognomy,' though disfigured by what was 'undoubtedly the occasional scowl of some unpleasant reminiscence'—(it appears by the sequel that this 'made a stronger impression upon me than it did upon many others')—was 'prepossessing and intelligent,' while 'the general cast of his features was impressed with elegance and character.' The next day Galt took ship for Sardinia,

and, when Byron and Hobhouse came aboard the packet, it seemed to him that 'in the little bustle of embarking their luggage his Lordship affected . . . more aristocracy than befitted his years on the occasion.' Also, he wouldn't put on the passenger at all (as Hobhouse did): on the contrary, he 'sat on the rail, leaning on the mizzen shrouds, inhaling, as it were, poetic sympathy from the gloomy rock, then dark and stern,' etc. About the third day out from Gibraltar 'Byron relented from his rapt mood . . . and became playful'; produced pistols, and approved himself the best shot on board at a bottle, 'but not pre-eminently so'; helped the captain to catch a turtle—'I rather think two'; and did his part (we may assume) in hooking a shark, 'part of which was dressed for breakfast,' but 'tasted without relish,' for 'your shark is but a cannibal dainty.' And so on, and so on. Galt was amused by and pleased with Hobhouse, who told him bawdy stories—(stories 'more after the matter and manner of Swift than of Addison')—and was 'altogether an advantageous specimen of a well-educated English gentleman.' But John Galt.

John Galt. Byron, who ate little, and drank less, and persisted in 'sitting amidst the shrouds and rattlings in the tranquillity of the moonlight, churming an inarticulate melody,' seemed 'almost apparitional' to him—suggested, in fact, that classic of the *genre*, 'a mystery in a winding-sheet crowned with a halo.' 'Tis true there were times when he was 'familiar and earthy'; but, as a rule, 'his dwelling was amidst the murk and the mist, and the home of his spirit in the abysm of the storm, and the hiding-places of guilt.' Even at two-and-twenty you couldn't meet him — or rather Galt couldn't—'without experiencing a presentiment that he was destined to execute some singular and ominous purpose.' Thus Galt, some twenty years after the event, of Byron at sea; and as Byron admitted to Lady Blessington that, while he saw that Galt was 'mild, equal, and sensible,' he 'took no pains to cultivate his acquaintance,' the sentiment may be accepted as natural, if the expression may not. But at Cagliari—(where Galt rather thinks that he may very possibly have seen the real original of Lara in the pit of the theatre)—the acquaintance ripened; on the voyage to

Sicily 'the champagne was uncorked and in the finest condition'; and at Malta, despite the lack of 'a salute from the batteries' (which Byron expected), it was found to be still on tap, for Byron and Hobhouse had to begin by 'begging a bed and a morsel for the night' of a particular friend of Galt's; and 'God forgive me!' says Galt, with a certain irrelevancy, 'but I partook of Byron's levity at the idea of personages so consequential wandering destitute in the streets,' etc. There is more of Malta, and there is much of Greece (Galt and Byron met again at Athens), but I shall sample Galt no further. Enough to say that after the return to England, and at a time when Byron 'could not well be said to be a celebrated character'—a time, in fact, when *Childe Harold* was known to Murray and Dallas alone—'I was frequently with him.' Then, however, came a tiff over *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), the story of which, as Galt insisted, was—not Byron's but —Galt's. Byron protested, and the tiff was ended, for the time being, by a very friendly letter. But the relation was not one made to last. At this time Byron, as he confessed to Lady Blessington, 'was in no frame of

John Galt.

John Galt. mind to form an impartial opinion' of Galt:—'His mildness and equanimity struck me even then; but, to say the truth, his manner had not deference enough for my then aristocratical taste, and, finding I could not awe him into a respect sufficiently profound for my sublime self, either as a peer or an author, I felt a little grudge against him,' etc. If I add that Byron thought highly of Galt's novels (he read *The Entail* three times), and spoke very sensibly and well of the peculiar quality of his gift, I shall have said enough of Galt and Byron during Byron's life. The worst came after Byron's death, when Galt read (in Moore) an entry in one of Byron's *Diaries* that he (Galt) was 'almost the last person on whom any one would commit literary larceny.' That nettled him, and, in *The Life of Lord Byron* (1830), a work which, as we have seen, is rather well meant than well written, but which is still worth reading, he reflects (1) that *Childe Harold* was preceded by 'a poem in the Spenserian measure,' which was 'called *The Unknown*,' which was 'intended to describe . . . pilgrim . . . the scenes I expected to visit,' and on which 'I was occasionally

engaged . . . during the passage with Lord Byron from Gibraltar to Malta, *and he knew what I was about*; (2) that 'I wrote at Athens a burlesque poem on nearly the same subject' as *The Curse of Minerva*, that the MS. was 'sent to his Lordship in Asia Minor, and returned to me through Mr. Hobhouse,' and that 'his *Curse of Minerva* I saw for the first time in 1828 in Galignani's edition of his works'; and (3) that, though 'his Lordship disdained to commit any larceny on me, and no doubt the following passage from *The Giaour* is perfectly original' (follows the passage), yet 'not the most judicious action of all my youth was to publish certain,' etc., and 'his Lordship had the printed book in his possession long before,' etc., 'and may have read the following passage,' etc. etc. etc. It might be inferred from this that the creator of the inimitable Micah Balquhidder and the scarce less admirable Lady Grippy (as who should say a Glasgow Mrs. Gamp) was not remarkable for humour in private life. But, however that be, he was the only true begetter of the 'apparitional' Byron—the Byron who was as a mystery in a winding-sheet crowned with a halo, at

John Galt.

John Galt. the same time that he was 'distinguished for superior personal elegance, particularly in his bust.'

Lady Jersey. 'SUPPOSE that you were in love with a girl, and that her father refused his consent to the union, what would you do?' Thus, some time in 1782, John, Tenth Earl of Westmoreland, to Child the banker. 'Do?' was the answer: 'why, run away with her, to be sure!' That very night ('tis said), Lord Westmoreland and his interlocutor's one child eloped together, and took the road from Berkeley Square to Gretna Green. The father followed 'hot and instant in their trace,' and in the end so nearly ran them down that Lord Westmoreland had to stand up in the fleeing chaise, and shoot one of the banker's leaders: which happy yet desperate expedient enabled him to make good his retreat. Three months after the wedding, Robert Child died, bequeathing his very splendid fortune to the first daughter, who should be called Sarah, after his own dead wife. This was LADY SARAH SOPHIA FANE; and on the 23rd May 1804 she married George

Villiers, Fifth Earl of Jersey, twice Lord Chamberlain of the Household, twice Master of the Horse—(according to Byron, as reported by Lady Blessington, 'Pegasus was perhaps the only horse of whose points Lord Jersey couldn't be a judge')—and, Lord Malmesbury says, 'in manner and appearance *le plus grand seigneur* of his time.' Lady Jersey.

From the beginning to the end the Countess of Jersey, who was extremely beautiful, was the greatest of great ladies *de par le monde*, and wielded an influence in society which none, perhaps, but Lady Palmerston's could rival. She was one of the Committee of Lady Patronesses which decided who should, and who should not, be admitted to Almack's, the assembly rooms in King Street, St. James's Street, founded in 1769, and then 'the Seventh Heaven of the fashionable world' (GRONOW): so that, after 1815, 'to be excluded from them was fatal to any one who aspired to belong to the *élite* of fashion' (LORD WILLIAM LENNOX). To Almack's, after Waterloo, Lady Jersey imported 'the favourite quadrille, which has so long remained popular' (a French print, copied into Gronow's First Set of *Reminiscences*, shows

Lady Jersey.

her in act to dance it, her fellows being Lord and Lady Worcester, and Clanronald Macdonald); and at Almack's (1819) Ticknor, who describes her 'as a beautiful creature with a great deal of talent, taste, and elegant accomplishment,' stood by on a memorable occasion when the Duke of Wellington (a great society man: whose nickname was The Beau) was announced at seven minutes past eleven of the clock, and heard her say, 'with emphasis and distinctness,' these awful words:—'Give my compliments—Lady Jersey's compliments—to the Duke of Wellington, and say that she is very glad that the first enforcement of the rule of exclusion is such that hereafter no one can complain of its application. *He cannot be admitted.*' [It is worth noting that once before the Duke had been denied his place in Paradise, for that he came to look for it in trousers, and not in breeches as a reputable angel should.] Gronow, who did not love the Countess, complains that, in 1814—when the Committee consisted of herself, the Countess Lieven, Lady Castlereagh, Lady Sefton, the Countess Cowper, Mrs. Drummond Burrell, and the Princess Esterhazy,—'her bearing,' as com-

pared to Lady Cowper's, 'was that of a theatrical tragedy queen,' and that 'whilst attempting the sublime, she frequently made herself simply ridiculous, being inconceivably rude, and in her manner often ill-bred.' But there were two Lady Jerseys, it would seem; and this one was the leader of *ton*, whom Byron described to Lady Blessington as 'the veriest tyrant that ever governed Fashion's fools, and compelled them to shake their caps and bells as she willed it.' The other, the Lady Jersey of private life, was not at all that sort of person. In the May of this same year Byron, who was ever her devout admirer—('Does she still retain her beautiful cream-coloured complexion and raven hair?' he asked at Genoa)—and who was very soon to see her dancing with the Czar:— Lady Jersey.

> He wore but a starless blue coat, and in kersey-
> mere breeches, waltzed round with the Countess of
> Jersey,
> Who, lovely as ever, looked just as delighted
> With majesty's presence, as those she invited:—

inscribed to her the famous *Condolatory Address*:—'On the Occasion of the Prince Regent Returning her Picture to Mrs.

Lady Jersey.

Mee.' 'Don't be very angry with me,' he writes, in a note (unpublished) communicated to me by the present Earl. 'If ill-done, the shame can only be mine. . . . They were begun and finished since ten o'clock to-night, so that, whether good or bad, they were done in good earnest. Do with them what you please. Whether they amuse your friends or light your fire, I shall be content, so they don't offend *you*.' This is scarce the sort of letter which a man would write to 'a theatrical tragedy queen'; nor is a Siddons *manquée* suggested by Sheridan's description (1815: reported by Lady Granville and quoted by Mr. Fraser Rae) of his 'Silence' (so he called her) as 'a pretty rushing babbling stream, never stagnant.' [From this of Sheridan's about his 'Silence,' by the way, you understand why Byron 'used to long to tell her that she spoiled her looks by excessive animation,' for 'eyes, tongue, head, and arms were all in motion at once.'] Take, too, the acutely observed, not altogether friendly portrait which Charles Greville painted of her after staying at Middleton in 1819:—

1819, *January 17th*—'. . . It was very agreeable, and the house extremely comfortable. Lady

Jersey is an extraordinary woman, and has many good qualities; surrounded as she is by flatterers and admirers, she is neither proud nor conceited. She is full of vivacity, spirit, and good-nature, but the wide range of her sympathies and affections proves that she has more general benevolence than particular sensibility in her character. She performs all the ordinary duties of life with great correctness, because her heart is naturally good; and she is, perhaps, from her temperament, exposed to fewer temptations than the generality of her sex. She is deficient in passion and in softness (which constitute the greatest charm in women), so that she excites more of admiration than of interest; in conversation she is lively and pleasant, without being very remarkable, for she has neither wit, nor imagination, nor humour; her understanding is active rather than strong, and her judgment is too often warped by prejudice to be sound. She has a retentive memory and a restless mind, together with a sort of intellectual arrangement, with which she appears rather to have been gifted by nature than to have derived from the cultivation of her reasoning faculties.' Lady Jersey.

It may have been a mistake in taste for Lady Jersey to identify herself (as she did) with the cause of the ill-guided and ill-starred Caroline of Brunswick (whose worst enemy her mother-in-law, the Dowager Countess, had been); and it may be that

Lady Jersey.

the Regent, in turning her picture out of his Gallery of Beauties, was within his rights as both Gentleman and King. But the enduring argument in her favour is that, despite the weight and manner of her tyranny, she so developed and consolidated her social influence that in the end, Lord Malmesbury says, she was 'almost a European personage, for no crowned head or representative of royalty ever landed in England without immediately calling on her, and being found in her *salon* during his stay.'

She died at eighty-two, having survived her husband (by some seventeen years) and her three daughters—(one of them married an Esterhazy, while the second eloped, as her grandmother before her)—and displayed to the last 'the courage and coolness for which she was famous' (MALMESBURY). These qualities were certainly conspicuous in her treatment of Byron at the lowest pitch of his fortune. On the eve of his departure into banishment, when all London was ringing with the rumour of his misdeeds, and there was scarce a voice which dared uplift itself in his defence, she took the lists for him with equal benevolence and intrepidity, 'made a party for him

expressly,' and received him with a serene and gracious 'kindness,' which he remembered gratefully until the last. The 'party' was a failure. Most of the guests were uncivil or worse, and only one, Miss Mercer, afterwards Lady Keith, was cordial. 'Nothing short, perhaps,' says Moore, 'of that high station in society which a life as blameless as it is brilliant has secured to her, could have placed beyond all reach of misrepresentation, at that moment, such a compliment to one marked by the world's censure so deeply.' This is probably true. In any case, it was Byron's last taste of English Society, and on the lady's side 'twas well and valiantly done. Byron's own account of it was the page which Moore regretted worst of all in the MS. *Memoir*. In effect, Byron's true demon was upon him: he was within a year or two of *Beppo* and the *Vision* and the early cantos of *Don Juan*. What wildernesses of unexceptionable printed matter one would cheerfully resign, to know that this piece of his writing had escaped the grate in Albemarle Street, and would presently be given to the world!

Lady Jersey.

Lady Caroline Lamb.

BORN PONSONBY, LADY CAROLINE (1785-1828) was daughter to the Third Earl of Bessborough, by Henrietta Frances, daughter to the First Earl Spencer, and sister to the beautiful Duchess, Georgiana of Devonshire. Reared in a *milieu* of uncommon state and splendour and self-indulgence, at ten years old she made verses, but could neither write nor read. Then she went to live with her grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, and, having an active body and a quick and apprehensive mind, learned French and Italian, dabbled in the classics, drew, painted, sang, danced, rode—became, in short, the parcel-blue and parcel-beauty who was presently to queen it at Melbourne House. At nineteen she fell in with William Lamb (1779-1848), then the penniless younger son of Penistone Lamb, First Viscount Melbourne; and at twenty (1805), he being then his father's heir and a man six years her elder, she married him. It was a love-match more or less; and both the parties lived to regret it. Meanwhile, she bore him a son; and for a certain while, despite her whims and humours and frivolities—despite,

too, a distribution of energy among so many points, that to read of her to-day is to conjure up a sort of Zimri-in-Petticoats—things went well enough between them. But, as Mr. Dunckley has noted of her in the admirable sketch inserted in his *Lord Melbourne*—(in 'The Queen's Prime Ministers')—her whole life 'was composed of a series of episodes in which love, or what passed for it, played a leading part.' Vain, selfish, wilful, spoiled, she was one of those bravos of the heart who, while they must still be challenging—challenging for the excitement of combat and the glory of victory—yet often lose their heads, forget their prime object, and are left hurt or dead upon the ground. And, as she was unscrupulous in attack, so was she disadvantaged by defeat to the loss, not only of dignity and self-control, but also of all self-respect and all care for others. She could jilt, it seems, without a pang—as many women can; but she might not endure disdain—as, for that matter, what woman ever could? And, as she knew not reticence, nor cared twopence who suffered so she had her way, it is not astonishing that in a very few years her husband's regard, for all his affable, genial,

Lady Caroline Lamb.

Lady Caroline Lamb.

affectionate nature, was something the worse for wear.

Even so, the time of real trouble was to come. In the February of 1812 Byron put forth the First and Second *Harold*, and awoke to find himself—not merely famous, but—famous as English poet never was before. Lady Caroline saw the book at Rogers's (as Moore had done), and, after disdaining the writer openly (at Lady Westmoreland's) and confiding to her Diary that she thought him 'mad, bad, and dangerous to know,' felt suddenly aware that here was a worthy opposite in the duel of sex, and (not to crack the wind of the poor metaphor) at once proceeded to call him out. Her challenge was accepted, and in the sequel her reputation was so badly winged that she never recovered the use of it. Byron dined with her the day after Lady Holland made them known. He called, she says in a statement penned in dustier and less 'sanitated' days than ours:—'Rogers and Moore were standing by me. I was on the sofa; I had just come in from riding. I was filthy and heated. When Lord Byron was announced, I flew out of the room to wash myself. When I returned, Rogers

said, "Lord Byron, you are a happy man. Lady Caroline has been sitting in all her dirt with us, but when you were announced, she flew to beautify herself." Lord Byron wished to come and see me at eight o'clock when I was alone; that was my dinner-hour. I said he might. From that moment for more than nine months he almost lived at Melbourne House.' In no great while, that is, her 'goings-on' with Byron became the scandal they remained until the end. She sat with him, drove with him (in close carriages) from routs and plays, wrote verses to him, would even have had him take her jewels and pawn them for his own use—in short, did everything she could to compromise herself and him, and, above all, to absorb him—genius and love and glory and will—to the last atom. She achieved the inevitable effect. He's a fool, says an expert in human life and destiny, who pins his faith upon (among other things) a boy's love; and Byron, if he were no more a boy, was at all events too young and vain, too brilliant and too irresistible—especially too irresistible—for constancy. So, from being a goddess, Lady Caroline was in due course revealed a bore of the first magnitude: a

Lady Caroline Lamb.

Lady Caroline Lamb.

bore who rowed you in public, and wrote you reproaches by the ream, and tried to storm your chambers in disguise, and at supper sought to mangle herself with table-knives, or essayed to cast herself out of ball-room windows. What was there for it but division? There was an interview, and there were letters. [One very frantic, desperate, and loverlike elucubration from Byron, in which the writer protests himself ready 'to obey, to honour, love, and fly with you, *when, where, and how* yourself . . . may determine': the sort of composition, in fact, which young men achieve in certain circumstances, and then make haste to blush for or to forget: is printed in Mr. Cordy Jeaffreson's *The Real Lord Byron* (i. 261-3) from a copy 'made from the original MS.'] But no sort of *modus vivendi* was possible, and, to smooth things over, Lady Bessborough took her deliberately impulsive child to Ireland, to be out of Byron's way. Still, they corresponded; and after some time, Lady Caroline intimated her intention of returning to London and her place in Byron's life and heart. The answer to this intimation, written upon paper stamped with the coronet and the initials of a detested

rival (Lady Oxford, it is said), was 'that cruel letter that I have published in *Glenarvon*; it destroyed me; I lost my brain. I was bled, leeched; kept'—(thus the heroine to her friend, Lady Morgan, the Wild Irish Girl)—'for a week in the filthy "Dolphin" at Rock.' Here is the document, or as much of it as Lady Caroline chose to publish:— Lady Caroline Lamb.

LADY CAROLINE LAMB,—I am no longer your lover; and since you oblige me to confess it by this truly unfeminine persecution, learn that I am attached to another, whose name it would of course be dishonest to mention. I shall ever remember with gratitude the many instances I have received of the predilection you have shown in my favour. I shall ever continue your friend, if your ladyship will permit me so to style myself. And as a first proof of my regard, I offer you this advice: correct your vanity, which is ridiculous; exert your absurd caprices on others; and leave me in peace.—Your obedient servant,

BYRON.

A 'cruel letter'? Doubtless. But what is, what has ever been, more cruel than the man a woman has sickened of those favours which she yet insists on thrusting on his acceptance? The situation is as old as

Lady Caroline Lamb.

Society, and Byron's way of ending it was, and is, and will ever remain, a convention of the game:—

> The Eternal Saki from that bowl has poured
> Millions of bubbles like him, and will pour.

And for Lady Caroline, as for himself, it was not an end but a beginning. Lady Melbourne, William Lamb's mother, was always his very good friend; he had proposed to her kinswoman, Miss Milbanke, in the autumn of the *Harold* year itself; in 1814 he proposed again; in the January of 1815 came the Marriage; and on the 25th April 1816 followed the Exile. In the interval Lady Caroline had not been idle; and, whatever her effect in the part of a Lapland Witch, whatever her share in the storm which drove her quondam lover from England, it is certain, at least, that she had him burned in effigy (she sent him an account of the proceedings), certain that she wrote and published *Glenarvon* in the year of his departure, and certain that in *Glenarvon* she did her best against his fame and him. She wrote this wretched book, so she tells you, in a page's habit, and at dead of night; and for a motto

she adapted two famous verses from *The Corsair*:— Lady Caroline Lamb.

> He left a name to all succeeding times,
> Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes.

But when Byron had read, he had no more to say of *Glenarvon* than this:—'It seems to me, that if the authoress had written the *truth*, and nothing but the truth—the whole truth—the romance would not only have been more *romantic*, but more entertaining. As for the likeness, the picture can't be good.—I did not sit long enough.'

His first sentence may well have given Disraeli the idea of a matchless scene in *Venetia*. For the rest, the sole change suffered by that antic disposition which was Lady Caroline's was for the worse. In 1824 it chanced that, riding out one morning, she saw a funeral pass the gates, and, asking whose it was, was told that it was Byron's. It was her first news of his death, and she took to her bed in a state of utter collapse, nor recovered till she had sent for Edward Bulwer, then a boy of twenty-one, added him to her list of opposites, given him a rival in the person of a certain Mr. Russell, 'a fashionable beau, extremely handsome,

Lady Caroline Lamb.

but dull, insipid, and silly,' and sent him so far off his wits with jealousy, that in the end he must have recourse to flight and the loss of twenty ounces of blood.—(DUNCKLEY.) By this time, in fact, her eccentricities had grown to such a pitch of extravagance that there was nothing for William Lamb but to leave her. This he did (1824), as amiably as he did everything; but in 1828, the year which saw him Viscount Melbourne, she died in his company forgiven and at peace.

A handful of opinions about her. I think it must be she of whom Lady Byron (July-August 1815) writes thus to 'Dearest Sis' (Augusta Leigh):—'She has never called on me, and when I made her a vis—(*sic*) with my mother, was very dignified. . . . She asked after B——!—Such a wicked-looking cat I never saw.'—(Morrison Autographs.) Disraeli, greatly daring, essayed to realise her in the Mrs. Felix Lorraine of *Vivian Grey*. After *Glenarvon* Rogers dismissed her in a famous couplet from Pope:—

> From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
> Poxed by her love and libelled by her hate.

'It is at least extraordinary,' Harness writes, 'that, while thus courted and admired, if his (Byron's) life were as licentious as some have represented, the only scandal which disturbed the decorum of Society'—(the Society, be it remembered, which had not long lost 'Old Q.', that indefatigable virtuoso (so to speak), which had still its Regent and its Yarmouth, its Harriet Wilson and its Mrs. Clarke, to name but these, and to which *crim. con.* was an essential of being) — 'and with which Byron's name is connected, did not originate in any action of his but in the insane and unrequited passion of a woman.' Last of all, Sir Walter:—'Poor soul! if a godlike face and godlike powers could have made any excuse for devilry, to be sure she had one.' Withal she was a true histrion of the heart, had a right instinct for what she deemed the *beau rôle* and the centre of the stage, and could play her part to suit all humours. '*That beautiful pale face is my fate*': so (as she told Scott's friend) she told herself in the beginning: and, writing to Murray (13th July 1824):—'I am sure I am very sorry I ever said one word against him.' Each of these utterances is what is

Lady Caroline Lamb.

Lady Caroline Lamb.

called a *mot de la fin*; and each is capital of its kind.

Sir Walter Scott.

BYRON began, of course, by lumping SCOTT with Jeffrey. Both were products of Edinburgh; so both were equally damnable, and both must be (and both were) brought forth and scourged before the people, the one as a hackney poet—('my crime,' says Scott, 'was having written a poem . . . for a thousand pounds')—the other as a venal critic. Scott was no better pleased than another man of spirit would be in the circumstances; and soon after the publication of *English Bards* you find him writing (7th August 1809) of 'a young whelp of a Lord Byron,' and noting that 'it is not his Lordship's merit, though it may be his great good fortune, that he was not born to live by his literary talents or success.' Again (4th April 1812) he tells Joanna Baillie that *Childe Harold* is 'a clever poem, but gives no good symptoms of the writer's heart or morals,' that 'it must require impudence at least equal to the noble Lord's other powers, to claim sympathy for the *ennui* arising from his

being tired of his wassailers and his paramours,' etc. etc. But, once made, the acquaintance, which was of Scott's seeking, was never crossed by so much as the shadow of a shade. As matter of fact, in nothing which the great and good Sir Walter ever wrote are sanity of judgment and soundness of humanity more conspicuous than in (1) the 'interesting communication' with which, years after the event, he 'found time, in the midst of all his marvellous labours for the world,' to 'favour' Byron's biographer; and (2) the reflections on Byron's death which he contributed (1824) to an Edinburgh newspaper. They met not often, nor corresponded very vigorously; but the understanding of these two radiant and distinguished spirits was none the less complete for that. 'No one,' Scott writes to Murray (10th January 1817), 'can honour Lord Byron's genius more than I do, and no one had so great a wish to love him personally, though personally we had not the means of becoming very intimate'; and he goes on to regret that he had not interfered, as he might have done, in Byron's 'family distress (deeply to be deprecated, and in which probably he can

Sir Walter Scott.

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Sir Walter Scott.

yet be excused),' for the reason that he 'always seemed to give me credit for wishing him sincerely well.' Thus Scott to Murray; and thus Murray, concerning Scott, to Byron (22nd September 1818):—'The Saturday and Sunday previous I passed most delightfully with Walter Scott, who was incessant in his inquiries after your welfare. He entertains the noblest sentiments of regard towards you, and speaks of you with the best feelings.' I might go on, but this is enough on the one part. On the other, I shall only note that, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* once off the writer's stomach, Byron never wavered in his admiration and respect for Scott. 'There was something highly gratifying to the feelings'—of the Countess of Blessington—'in witnessing the warmth and cordiality that Byron's countenance displayed in talking of Sir Walter Scott,' whom, for the rest, he 'never named but with praise and affection.' 'We don't say "Mr. Cæsar,"' he writes, by way of apology for speaking of his friend as plain Scott; the Novels, 'a literature in themselves,' are among the books he loves best and reads most; Scott's review of the Third *Harold*

gives him extreme pleasure; to Scott *Cain* is dedicated, 'by his obliged friend and faithful servant,' (1821); and Scott, the 'Ariosto of the North,' of the Fourth *Harold* (1817)—'meaning thereby of all countries which are not the South,'—the 'Monarch of Parnassus, and the most English of bards' of a certain 'triangular *gradus ad Parnassum*' (1813), accepts 'with feelings of great obligation' Byron's 'very flattering proposal' to prefix the name of Walter Scott to his 'very grand and tremendous drama.' It is well at all times to remember that Byron's name, if it stank in the nostrils of Georgian London, was always sweet, and sweet enough, in those of the best good man of his time.

Sir Walter Scott.

HOPPNER'S portrait of LADY OXFORD (1774-1824)—one of his best; exhibited in 1798—shows a woman amiable as beautiful—the very woman, in fact, of the letter from Uvedale Price, with which I end this Note. It seems to have been Lady Oxford of whom Byron spoke thus at Genoa (BLESSINGTON, *Conversations*, etc., 1834):—'Even now the autumnal charms of

Lady Oxford.

Lady Oxford.

Lady —— are remembered by me with more than admiration. She resembled a landscape by Claude Lorraine, with a setting sun, her beauties enhanced by the knowledge that they were shedding their last dying leaves, which threw a radiance round. A woman . . . is only grateful for her *first* and *last* conquests. The first of poor dear Lady ——'s was achieved before I entered on this world of care, but the *last*, I do flatter myself, was reserved for me, and a *bonne bouche* it was.' If this be a memory of the Countess, it is a good enough commentary on the fact that Byron took Thyrnham Court to be near the Oxfords next year; and that he thought of going to Sicily this year in Lord Oxford's train, and did actually get as far as Portsmouth. Portsmouth was the end; for the Oxfords were long abroad, and Byron lived his life at top speed. Death came to both these lovers in the same year. And on the occasion of her departure, Uvedale Price wrote thus (CLAYDEN, *Rogers and His Contemporaries*, i. 397-8) to Rogers, from Foxley, under date of 26th December 1824:—

'This is a melancholy subject'—[the death, by consumption, of Lord Aberdeen's children]—and

'I must go to another: poor Lady Oxford. I had heard with great concern of her dangerous illness, but hoped she might get through it, and was much, very much grieved to hear that it had ended fatally. I had, as you know, lived a great deal with her from the time she came into this country, immediately after her marriage, but for some years past, since she went abroad, had scarcely had any correspondence or intercourse with her, till I met her in town last spring. I then saw her twice, and both times she seemed so overjoyed to see an old friend, and expressed her joy so naturally and cordially, that I felt no less overjoyed at seeing her after so long an absence. She talked, with great satisfaction, of our meeting for a longer time this next spring, little thinking of an eternal separation. There could not, in all respects, be a more ill-matched pair than herself and Lord Oxford, or a stronger instance of the cruel sports of Venus, or, rather, of Hymen:— Lady Oxford.

Cui placet impares
Formas atque animos sub juga ahenea
Sævo mittere cum joco.

It has been said that she was, in some measure, forced into the match; had she been united to a man whom she had loved, esteemed, and respected, she herself might have been generally respected and esteemed as well as loved; but in her situation, to keep clear of all misconduct required a strong mind or a cold heart; perhaps both, and she had neither. Her failings were in

Lady Oxford.

no small degree the effect of circumstances; her amiable qualities all her own. There was something about her in spite of her errors remarkably attaching, and that something was not merely her beauty; "kindness has resistless charms," and she was full of affectionate kindness to those she loved, whether as friends or as lovers. As a friend, I always found her the same; never at all changeful or capricious; as I am not a very rigid moralist and am extremely open to kindness, "I could have better spared a better woman."'

Leigh Hunt.

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859) was imprisoned in Horsemonger Lane Gaol for that famous description (*Examiner*, 12th March 1813) of the Prince Regent as 'a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demi-reps,' and 'a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity.'

Hunt was a Radical, of course, and Moore a Whig; but to abuse the Regent was to go straight to the heart of the great Whig Party, among whose members, says Moore, 'there existed . . . at this period a strong feeling of indignation at the late de-

fection from themselves and their principles of the illustrious personage who had been so long looked up to as the friend and patron of both.' As a good and loyal Whig, Moore himself was 'warmly—perhaps intemperately—under the influence of this feeling'; he 'regarded the fate of Mr. Hunt with more than common interest'; so, 'immediately on my arrival in town (I) paid him a visit in his prison.' Byron heard of the experience and of the prisoner's circumstances—'his trelliced flower-garden without, and his books, busts, pictures, and pianoforte within'; and being, he also, of the Whig way of thinking, requested an introduction. The visit was repeated, there was a dinner, there were presents of books; and, 'It strikes me,' Hunt wrote to his wife, with a truly amazing capacity for self-deception, 'that he and I shall become friends, literally and cordially speaking. There is something in the texture of his mind that seems to resemble mine to a thread; I think we are cut out of the same piece, only a different wear may have altered our respective naps a little.' Byron, on his part, thought the captive 'an extraordinary character. . . . Much talent, great

Leigh Hunt.

Leigh Hunt.

independence of spirit, and an austere yet not repulsive aspect,' at the same time that he was 'the bigot of virtue (not *religion*), and, perhaps, a trifle opinionated. . . . But withal, a valuable man, and less vain than success, and even the consciousness of preferring the right to the expedient, might excuse.' The 'respective naps' are different, to be sure; but for some time the relations between the wearers were friendly enough. It was to Byron that Hunt dedicated that achievement in affected English and shabby-genteel heroics in which, by an immortal piece of bathos, Dante's lovers, at the very crisis of their fate, are turned into a suburban milliner and her 'young man':—

> 'May I come in?' said he;—it made her start,—
> That *smiling* (!) voice—she coloured, pressed her heart
> A moment, as for breath, and then with free
> And usual tones said, 'Oh yes, certainly (!)':—

and Byron, though he despised the style, yet thought the poem 'a devilish good one,' recommended it to Murray, and would have liked Moore to give it a hand in *The Edinburgh Review*. Again, Hunt says that he was much with Byron in the pre-Exile

days, and when the Exile came, he broke forth in valediction and in song:— Leigh Hunt.

> And so adieu, dear Byron,—dear to me
> For many a cause, disinterestedly, etc.

But by 1818 Byron's mood had grown truly critical, not to say truculent:—

'He (Hunt) is a good man, with some poetical elements in his chaos, but spoiled by the Christ-Church Hospital and a Sunday newspaper,—to say nothing of the Surrey gaol, which conceited him into a martyr. But he is a good man. . . . He believes his trash of vulgar phrases, tortured into compound barbarisms, to be *old* English. . . . He sent out his *Foliage* by Percy Shelley . . . and of all the ineffable Centaurs that was ever begotten by Self-Love upon a Nightmare, I think this monstrous Sagittary the most prodigious. He (Leigh H.) is an honest charlatan, who has persuaded himself into a belief in his own impostures, and talks Punch in pure simplicity of heart. . . . Is that * * * at the head of *your* profession in *your* eyes? I'll be cursed if he is of *mine*, or ever shall be. . . . But Leigh Hunt is a good man; and a good father—see his Odes to all the Masters Hunt; a good husband—see his Sonnet to Mrs. Hunt; a good friend—see his Epistles to different people; and a great coxcomb, and a very vulgar person in everything about him.'

Leigh Hunt.

It is delightfully savage. But listen to Keats (4th Jan. 1819), who knew his Hunt like a book:—'In reality he is vain, egotistical, and disgusting in taste and morals. . . . He does one harm by making fine things petty, and beautiful things hateful.' By contrast this character of Byron's conveys the impression that the writer must have had a real regard for Hunt, however dashed with scorn, to have countenanced the famous tour to Italy at all.

That tour was made at Shelley's suggestion, and on funds (£200) which Shelley borrowed from Byron for the purpose. In the sequel it proved the worst day's work he ever did. Its objects were (1) rest and change for Hunt, and (2) the foundation of a magazine to be written by Hunt, Shelley, and Byron. It is absurd to suppose that such a venture could have prospered; but, as matter of fact, no such venture was ever made. Hunt (with his wife and six children) was bound for Pisa, where Shelley (then at Lerici) had furnished the ground-floor of the Palazzo Lanfranchi, Byron's house, for him. At Leghorn he was joined by Shelley and Williams in the *Don Juan*.

The party went on to Pisa, whither Byron followed; and, a few days after, the *Don Juan*—'built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark'—put out to sea for the last time. The impossible combination disappeared; and Byron was left with Hunt (*cum suis*) on his hands, and the strong conviction in his mind that the whole position was a mistake. In effect, the results were disastrous all round. The host, to his discredit, was at no particular pains to make himself agreeable to his guest; the guest, who was at best a journalist of parts, but thought himself by far the better poet of the two—(he was very soon to show, and in *The Liberal* too, how Byron ought to write the *ottava rima*!)—was not greatly concerned to conciliate his host, at the same time that he looked to that host to give lavishly and ask no questions. In this, however, the guest was disappointed. More: he had been all his life a sponge, and for the first time in his life (as Mr. Monkhouse has remarked in his excellent little monograph) he was made to feel like the sponge he was. He had, as Keats says, taken Haydon's 'silver,' and 'expostulated on the indelicacy' of a demand

Leigh Hunt.

Leigh Hunt.

for its return; and in less trying times he had had £1400 out of Shelley in a single year. Byron was not that stamp of treasurer. He was better versed in character and life than Shelley; and, whether or not he had contracted what he calls the 'good old-gentlemanly vice,' it is certain that Hunt, though he accepted some £500 of him, and lived 'for the best part of two years' at his expense, was neither satisfied nor pleased. Thus the pike which tries to swallow what appears to him his natural prey, but has to give over the experience, 'distracted and amazed.' The starting of *The Liberal* made matters worse. It was founded with Byron's money, and fed with such Byronisms as *Heaven and Hell*, the *Vision*, the translation from Pulci, and the letter to 'My dear Roberts.' But it was a failure from the beginning, when John Hunt was fined and imprisoned for publishing the *Vision*; and as, though it was little or nothing to Byron, it was bread of life, and more, to Hunt, nobody need be surprised, though everybody should be distressed, to find that Hunt was presently disposed—(I quote again his able and humane apologist)—to 'impute the meanest

motives to everything Byron said or did.' If you lie down with dogs (in fact), you get up with fleas. Byron consorted with Hunt, and four years after Byron's death (1828) Hunt published his *Lord Byron and His Contemporaries.* He wrote this stuff because he wanted money, and he would not have written it (so he says) could he have got money by any other means; and, with a littleness of mind and spirit unparalleled in any but a cast mistress or an embittered poetaster, he essayed to present the man on whom he had sponged 'for the best part of two years' as a cad of the first magnitude—as, in fact, as false, as selfish, as contemptible a human thing as had disgraced the century. Leigh Hunt.

But by the time that this ignoble piece of bookmaking got into print, the British public had awakened to a sense of what it had lost in Byron—to a sense, too, of its own superb stupidity in Byron's case; and, as Mr. Monkhouse says, its reception of Hunt's 'libel probably caused him more suffering than all the former attacks of the *Quarterly*'—(in which Lockhart described the thing as 'the miserable book of a miserable man')—'*Blackwood,* and other

Leigh Hunt,

enemies put together.' The most galling, I think, because the most contemptuous, diatribe of all came from his ex-friend, Moore. I shall quote it here in full, not from the *Satirical and Humorous Poems* (where it is signed 'T. Pidcock,' and dated from 'Exeter Change,' where the menagerie was), but from a copy, in the Morrison Autographs, in the handwriting of Augusta Leigh :—

THE 'LIVING DOG' AND THE 'DEAD LION'

THOMAS MOORE TO LEIGH HUNT

Jan. 13.

Next week will be published, as 'Lives' are the rage,
The whole Reminiscences, wondrous and strange,
Of a small puppy dog, that lived once in the Cage
Of the late noble Lion at Exeter Change.

Though the dog is a dog of the kind they call 'sad,'
'Tis a puppy that much to good breeding pretends;
And few Dogs have such opportunities had,
Of knowing how lions behave among friends.

How the Animal eats, how he snores, how he drinks,
Is all noted down by this Boswell so small,
And 'tis plain from each sentence the puppy dog thinks
That the Lion was no such great things after all.

Though he roar'd pretty well—this the puppy allows—
It was all, he says, borrow'd—all second-hand roar,
And he vastly prefers his own little bow-wows
[To] the loftiest War-note the Lion could pour.

'Tis indeed as good fun as a Cynic could ask, Leigh Hunt.
To see how this cockney-bred setter of rabbits
Takes gravely the head of the Forest to task
And judges of Lions by Puppy Dog habits.

Nay, fed as he was (and this makes [it] a dark case)
With sops every day from the Lion's own pan,
He lifts up his leg at the noble beast's carcase,
And does all a Dog, so diminutive can.

However, the Book 's a good book—being rich in
Examples and warnings to Lions high-bred,
How they suffer small mongrelly curs in their kitchen,
Who 'll feed on them living, and foul them when dead.

Thus Moore, and, broadly speaking, thus the general press. An ordinary person—if one can imagine an ordinary person in such circumstances—would have imitated Captain Shandy's (proposed) method of dealing with that work which the great Lepsius composed the day he was born. But Hunt was a spirited creature in his way; and, howbeit something saddened and surprised (above all surprised) by the terms of his reception, he at once proceeded to give proof positive that, as he told his readers, he had 'moral courage, and a great deal of it.' In Sir Walter's phrase (LANG, *Lockhart*, ii. 23), he had already 'behaved

Leigh Hunt.

like a hyæna to Byron,' for that he had 'dug him up to girn and howl over him in the same breath'; and in a second edition he showed that he could do still worse. For in certain Appendices, while protesting that 'no man could hold in greater horror' than he did 'the violation of the *sub iisdem trabibus*—the sacred enclosure of private walls,' he essayed to justify himself on this head; and in his Preface, retorting on a reference (LOCKHART) to his 'not very tractable children,' he ventured to 'thank God they were not tractable to' Byron, and to add this:—'I have something very awful to say on this subject in case it is forced from me.' He said not how nor when this 'something very awful' was discovered to him; and in common charity one must infer that it was neither when he was living under Byron's roof nor when he was taking Byron's money as an outdoor pensioner.

'I have many infirmities,' he wrote, 'and nothing great in me but my sympathy with mankind.' The infirmities are patent; but for the 'sympathy,' etc., one must go elsewhither than to *Lord Byron and His Contemporaries*. It is fair to add that Hunt

wrote with true piety of Shelley—(but if, as Trelawny says, he really did prefer his own Muse before Shelley's, the density of his conceit is not to be expressed in terms of words)—and Keats; that he lived to a green old age; that he numbered Carlyle among his many friends; and that another of them, Charles Dickens, was severely taken to task for presenting him as the Harold Skimpole of *Bleak House*. A person of parts, no doubt—of parts, and a certain charm, and a facile, amiable, liquorish temperament. But there was no clearer, keener vision than Keats's; and I fear that Keats's word about Leigh Hunt must be remembered as the last. Leigh Hunt.

CAPTAIN CHARLES MORRIS (1745-1838), author of innumerable moral songs (*Lyra Urbanica*, 1840), but remembered chiefly for *Jenny Sutton* and *The Great Plenipotentiary* (both still prized among amateurs of the *genre*), and a single line in *The Contrast*:— Charles Morris.

'O, give me the sweet shady side of Pall Mall.'

Being a Whig bard and satirist (he was

Charles Morris.

responsible for such pasquinades as *Billy's Too Young to Drive Us*) he incensed the Anti-Jacobins, who introduced him with peculiar opprobrium, in a sham account of the celebration of Fox's birthday. Thus runs that part of the report (compiled, 'tis said, from the *Morning Post* and *Morning Chronicle*: 'the *Courier* being too stupid for our purpose') which concerns him:—

'We know not how far Mr. Fox might have proceeded, had he not been interrupted by a jangling of bells from the Side-table which immediately drew all eyes that way. This proceeded from Captain Morris, who had fallen asleep during Mr. Fox's Song, and was now nodding on his chair, with a large paper Cap on his head, ornamented with gilt tassels and bells, which one of the Company had dexterously whipped on unperceived. The first motion was that of indignation; but the stupid stare of the unconscious Captain, who half opened his eyes at every sound of the bells as his head rose or fell, and immediately closed them again, *somno vinoque gravatus*, had such a powerful effect on the risible faculties of the Company, that they broke, as if by consent, into the most violent and convulsive fits of laughter; Mr. Fox himself not being exempt from the general contagion. As soon as the Captain was made sensible of the cause of this uproar, he attempted to pull off the Cap, but was prevented

by a Citizen from the *Corresponding Society*, who maintained that the Company had a right to be amused by the Captain in what manner they pleased; and that, as he seemed to amuse them more effectually in *that state* than in any other, he insisted, for one, on his continuing to wear the Cap. This was universally agreed to, with the exception of the Duke of Norfolk. The Captain was therefore led to the upper table, with all his "jangling honours loud upon him"! Here, as soon as he was seated, his Noble Friend called upon him for a Song. The Captain sang the *Plenipo* in his best manner. This was received with great applause; and then the Duke gave "The Defenders—of Ireland"—(*three times three*). Captain Morris then began:— Charles Morris.

"And all the Books of Moses":—

but was interrupted, before he had finished the first line, by Mr. Tierney, who declared he would not sit there and hear anything like ridicule on the Bible.—(*Much coughing and scraping.*)—Mr. Erskine took God to witness, that he thought the Captain meant no harm;—and a gentleman from Cambridge, whose name we could not learn, said, with great *naïveté*, that it was no more than was done every day by his acquaintance. Mr. Tierney, however, persisted in his opposition to the Song, and Captain Morris was obliged to substitute *Jenny Sutton* in the place of it. But the good humour of the company was already broken in

Charles Morris.

upon, and Mr. Tierney soon after left the room (to which he did not return) with greater marks of displeasure in his face than we ever remember to have seen there.'

Thus, too, Kirkpatrick Sharpe—Sir Walter's friend: withal 'the unclean bird, which buildeth its nest in the corner of the temple, and defileth the holy places,' of the *Chaldee Manuscript*—in that *Vision of Liberty* which he contributed to *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*:—

'On a cock sparrow fed with Spanish flies,
A swilling Captain came, with liquor mellow,
And still the crowd in hideous uproar cries,
"Sing us a b——dy song, thou d——d good fellow."
Incontinent he sets himself to bellow,
And shouts with all the strength that in him lies;
The Citizens exclaim, "He's sans pareilly O";
The Citizens in raptures roll their eyes,
And drink with leathern ears the fool's lewd ribaldries.'

(Both quotations are from Mr. Edmonds's Edition of *The Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*; London, 1890.) The captain was for many years a parasite of that violent Whig, the Duke of Norfolk, who left him nothing in the end. He had, however, an annuity of £200 from the Regent, and, for all his reputation, is described by Moore as 'a very

grave, steady person' (this is confirmed by the odd anonymous *Memoirs of a Man of Fashion*; London, 1821). For a pretty story of Morris and Lord Stowell and their old sweetheart, Molly Dacre (then Lady Clarke), see MOORE (*Diary*, 19th November 1829), who is also responsible for the story that the captain's widow expected £10,000 of Murray for the MS. afterwards published as *Lyra Urbanica*. Charles Morris.

OUR next round of toasts was a fancy quite new, Marquess of Hertford.
For we drank—and you'll own 'twas benevolent too—
To those well-meaning husbands, cits, parsons, or peers,
Whom we've, any time, honoured by courting their dears.
This museum of wittols was comical rather;
Old H—df—rt gave M—ss—y, and *I* gave your f—th—r.

Thus an 'Intercepted Letter' from 'G—ge, Pr—ce R—g—nt, to the E—rl of Y—rm—th'; and as matter of fact the second Marchioness of Hertford—(Isabella Anne Ingram Shepeard (*d.* 1834), daughter and co-heir of Charles, Viscount Irwin, of Scotland)—who had at this time 'reached the regulation age,' and was,

(As near as one can fix
From peerage dates) full fifty-six,

Marquess of Hertford.

was all-powerful with the Regent, and was justly execrated of the Whigs. They suspected her of alienating their sometime Patron's affections from them, and of dictating that course of policy, one effect—and not the worst—of which was their absolute exclusion from Place; and they applauded with both hands not only such capital chaff as the *Horace*: *Ode* XI. *Book* ii. ('Freely Translated by the Pr—ce R—g—nt'):—

> Go—bid her haste hither,
> And let her bring with her
> The latest No-Popery Sermon that 's going—
> Oh! let her come with her dark tresses flowing,
> All gentle and juvenile, curly and gay,
> In the manner of—Ackermann's *Dresses for May*:—

but also such ruffianism as the lines first quoted, and the well-nigh unpresentable anacreontic, *To a Plumassier*:—

> Seek me out a fine Pea-hen;
> Such a Hen, so tall and grand,
> As by Juno's side might stand,
> If there were no cocks at hand.
> Seek her feathers, soft as down, etc.

Her son, FRANCIS CHARLES SEYMOUR CONWAY, Earl of Yarmouth (1777-1842) and Third Marquess of Hertford (1822), was fifteen years the Prince's junior. Familiarly

known as 'Red Herrings,' by reason partly of his title and partly of the fiery hue of his whiskers :— Marquess of Hertford.

Thy whiskers, too, Yarmouth—alas! even they,
Tho' so rosy they burn,
Too quickly must turn
(What a heart-breaking change for thy whiskers!)
to *Grey* :—

he was one of the most conspicuous, as well as one of the most characteristic, figures of the later Georgian Age. Educated at Eton and Oxford (Christ Church and St. Mary's Hall: he proceeded to his M.A. degree as late as 1814), in 1798 he married Maria Fagniani, old Q's (or George Selwyn's: he left her £30,000) natural daughter, and entered the Commons as member for Orford (Suffolk). In 1802-3, after the Peace of Amiens, he took his wife to Paris, and was presently captured with the rest of his countrymen in France, and sent to Verdun: a special exception being made for his Countess, who remained in the capital. [In 1842 *The Times* (12th March) quotes *The Scotsman* to this effect :—'The wife of the deceased Marquis was the acknowledged mistress of Marshal Junot.' Hence, perhaps, the epithet in Moore's pasquinade :—'His

Marquess of Hertford.

Y—rm—th's own *Frenchified* hand cut it out.' Be this as it may, it was at Paris that was born her second son, the Lord Henry Seymour (1805-1859), who was afterwards to found the French Jockey Club, and of whom it is reported that neither could he speak English, nor had he ever set foot on English ground.] When the Whigs came in (1806), the Prince requested Fox, who was in *private* correspondence with Talleyrand, to negotiate Yarmouth's release; and the Emperor, believing him to be a personal friend of Fox's, let him out at once, and packed him off to England to arrange terms of peace. He reached London on 4th June, and was sent back as Envoy-Extraordinary; but in the interval there had been *pourparlers* with Russia, Napoleon had raised his terms, and Yarmouth was dished. His mission remained a secret till August, when he was joined by Lord Lauderdale, who took up the negotiations in his stead; but neither Lauderdale (with Yarmouth) for England nor d'Oubril for Russia was clever enough to play bowls with Napoleon, and in the sequel they went home baffled and shamed. (All this on the word of *The*

Gentleman's Magazine, May 1842.) In 1809 Yarmouth seconded his cousin Castlereagh in the duel with Canning; in 1810 he succeeded to 'the greatest part of the disposable property of the rich and eccentric Duke of Queensberry, the putative father of his wife'—to £150,000, that is, besides real estate; in 1811 he was made Vice-Chamberlain; in 1812 he was appointed Lord Warden of the Stanneries and a member of the Privy Council, and (with his mother) was preferred by the Regent before Lords Grey and Grenville, who declined to join the new Cabinet unless the Hertfords (the Second Marquess (1743-1822) was Lord High Chamberlain) and their son were removed from the Household; in 1814 he helped to found the Pugilistic Club, and was told off to do the honours to the Emperor Alexander, who gave him the Order of St. Anne; in 1822 he succeeded to the Marquisate, and received the Garter; and in 1827, being sent, as Ambassador-Extraordinary, to invest the Czar Nicholas with the Garter at Tsarkoeseloe, he played his part with a magnificence which set the Court and City gaping. After the passing of the Reform

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Marquess of Hertford.

Bill he 'took a dislike' to England, and chiefly lived abroad until his death, which made him still more notorious (if that were possible) than he had been in life. His will, indeed, was made the occasion for years of scandalous litigation. It disposed of a vast amount of property; it dealt largely with scamps and demi-reps; and it was so violently phrased that *The Times* declined to quote a number of its instructions. It is far too elaborate and long to analyse, much less to print in full; and the executors, who had their work cut out for them in any case, were moved, unwisely, to boggle at certain of its provisions. Hence an action by one Angélique Borel, who recovered £3000; hence, too, an action by Lord Hertford's valet, Nicholas Suisse, who recovered more thousands than I care to say; and hence the criminal prosecution of Suisse—first in London and then in Paris—on a charge of embezzling divers sums of money, amounting (on one count only) to as much as 100,000 francs. For the legitimate effect of the will, it remains obscure. But, so far as I can learn, a codicil (one of thirty) revoked a large bequest to the mother of Lord Hertford's

three wards, because she had formed a connexion which was displeasing to him; but those wards, the daughters of Admiral Sir Richard Strachan (scandal gave them another sire) :— Marquess of Hertford.

> Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
> Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham :—

Countess Zichy (who lived with him until the end), Countess Barthold, and Princess Ruffo got £86,000, £80,000, and £40,000, respectively. Also 'Lady Strachan's maid' took £5000 down and a life annuity of £1000; the servants £16,000 to £20,000 among them; John Wilson Croker (whose relations with the Marquess are suggested in Thackeray's Mr. Wenham and, especially, Disraeli's Mr. Rigby), £21,000 and the wine (the best of it was abroad, so he made not much by this part of the bequest); the executors £5000 apiece; and so on, and so on. Altogether an amazing document. 'Aware of the infamy of the character of one' of a pair of legatees, the testator 'wishes the other to be as little in the power of that person as possible, and regulates certain payments in order that the one person may have no occasion to

Marquess of Hertford.

shorten the life of the other.' This provision *The Times* made bold to reproduce. We may judge of those it let alone.

Besides being Lord Warden of the Stanneries, Lord Hertford was Steward and Vice-Admiral of the Duchy of Cornwall, Chief Commissioner of the Duchy of Cornwall, Recorder of Coventry and Bodmin, Custos Rotulorum of the County of Antrim, Vice-Admiral of the Coast of Suffolk, etc. etc. etc. Also, as the 'patron' of Aldeburgh, Bodmin, Orford, and Lisburne, he nominated eight Members of Parliament. Indeed, his chief claims to distinction are that he so lived his life as to make it as it were a sublimation of the life and spirit of his time, and was as high, as puissant, and as magnificent a being as that time could show. In this capacity he touched the imagination of two men of genius, and he exists in literature as the Monmouth of *Coningsby* and the Steyne of *Vanity Fair*. Both are masterpieces, and the one completes the other; for Lord Monmouth produces the impression not merely of the dissolute grandee, but also of the Great Noble who is naturally and easily in the front of politics and society, has the sense

of affairs, can be a statesman when he will, and on occasion can do the honours for his country as becomes the best among English gentlemen; while Lord Steyne, with his decoration of red hair and gleaming tusks, his leg and his *grand air* and his Garter, his effect in theatres and drawing-rooms, and his general potency in intrigue, remains a perfect exemplar of the debauched patrician, the person of birth and wealth and breeding who is above all an *homme à femmes*. And on the whole, Lord Hertford was ever rather Steyne than Monmouth to the general. I seem to remember him figuring thus, 'for all he's worth,' in that blackguard thing, *The Mysteries of the Court*; he appears (as, for that matter, who does not?), though to no great purpose, in the *Memoirs* of Harriette Wilson; and there is a little book, *The Confessions of Nicholas Suisse, Late Valet to the Marquis of Hertford* (Jackson and Co., 134 New Bond Street, 1842), which I would quote, if I dared, in illustration of the repute in which he was held, and of the terms in which men spoke and thought of him. [In reading Suisse, by the way, one cannot choose but think of a certain Monsieur

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Marquess of Hertford. Fiche—('Since Monseigneur's death he has returned to his native country, where he lives much respected, and has purchased from his prince the title of Baron Ficci') —and his desperate confidences to Mrs. Rawdon Crawley on the Pincian Hill.] In any case, he was a sterling Georgian type, a man of Byron's *monde*, a representative of the age whose mouthpiece Byron was; and that must serve as my excuse for this Note.

A last touch or two. Lord Yarmouth, being robbed of certain jewels, informed the authorities that he kept them 'in his rouge-box.' Also, he is said to have kicked and caned his master for misbehaviour to a lady. The story is told in Suisse's *Confessions*, and in a lampoon of the period, *R—y—l Stripes, or a Kick from Y—rm—th to Wa—s*, etc. 'A Poem, by P—— P——, Poet Laureat (London, E. Wilson, 1812)':—

> Lord Y——h's blood began to freeze,
> To see P——e G——e upon his knees,
> Yet guess'd the meaning of his motions:
> And thinking this no time for speech,
> Gave him a kick across the breech,
> Which marr'd his H——ss's devotions. . . .
>
> Loud roar'd the P——e, but roar'd in vain,
> L——d Y——h brandish'd high his cane,

And guided every r—y—l movement; Marquess of Hertford.
Now up, now down, now to, and fro
The R——t nimbly moved his toe,
The lady much enjoy'd the show,
And complimented his *improvement*. . . .

Soft pity touch'd the tender fair,
She heard his accents of despair,
His piteous sighs, his deep repentance;
And begg'd Lord Y——h to refrain,
And give some respite to his cane,
And mitigate the r—y—l sentence.

The Peer obey'd—the nymph admir'd—
No more he laid his stick upon him;
And Britain's blubb'ring P——e retir'd,
With *blushing honours* thick upon him, etc.

'PIPPIN'

ON September 23, 1814, the amiable and lovely Annabella M—— communicated to her dearest Emily an 'event that affords me the best prospect of happiness,' in the following terms:—'I am engaged to marry Lord B——. Convinced by intimate knowledge and the deepest investigation that he merits my highest esteem, whilst he possesses my strongest affection, I feel myself honoured in the choice; and I expect, of your candour and kindness, that you will rely more on the opinion which we have had *reason* to form, than on the vague prejudices of the world.' On October 1st, writing to Colonel D——: 'After an intimate, and not merely a recent knowledge,' Miss Annabella says, 'of his (Lord B——'s) character, with the best opportunities of judging his heart and dispositions, I have yielded to his sincere and

constant attachment, convinced that he is fully deserving of mine, and hoping to be successful in my endeavours to make him happy. I have reason to believe that we understand one another particularly well, and though I do not pretend to equal, I may be capable of appreciating his merits.' A few days after, in answer, apparently, to her dearest E., 'It is not,' the young thing says—'It is not in the great world that Lord B——'s true character must be sought. But ask of those nearest to him—of the unhappy whom he has consoled, of the poor whom he has blessed, of the dependants to whom he is the best of masters. . . . I cannot reproach myself for having resisted my own wishes as well as his, until *thoroughly* convinced that their fulfilment would produce mutual happiness. . . . I have a calm and deep security—a confidence in God and man.' Her friends and relations, she goes on to say, 'concur in thinking my views of happiness as fair as *this* world can promise; but in the dearest wishes I always look beyond temporary hopes.' Thus the fair, the accomplished, the unexceptionable Annabella M——. And in some eighteen months from the date of her expressing

these most beautiful sentiments, her ideal husband, overwhelmed with charges whose nature none has ever known, deserted a few days after the birth of the only child his wife was ever to bear him, was fleeing his country, a broken and dishonoured man. There is nothing like it in history, nor—so far as I know—in fiction neither!

For these passages are not excerpted from a hitherto unpublished work by the creator of the anxious Miss Harlowe, the high-souled Harriet, the noble and exemplary Sir Charles Grandison. Miss Austen had no hand in them, nor had Miss Burney. They were written by the Miss Milbanke, who three months after the writing (January 2, 1815) became Lady Byron, and they convey in terms sufficiently clear and exact her opinion of an engagement which had been some years in the making. Apparently the Milbankes were pleased all round. 'My daughter,' Lady Milbanke writes (October 4, 1814), 'is engaged to marry Lord Byron, *with the entire approbation of her father and myself*, to which is added my brother's kindest sanction. *You*, who, like Lord Byron, are favoured by the Muses' —(the lady's correspondent was the ineff-

able Sir James Bland Burgess of Porson's epigram :—

> 'Poetis nos lætamur tribus,
> Pye, Petro Pindar, parvo Pybus:
> Si ulterius ire pergis,
> Adde his Sir James Bland Burgis') :—

'no doubt admire him as a *poet*: but, believe me, he has, like yourself, a warm, affectionate, and liberal heart, with many qualities which promise happiness to the woman who will be his wife; his attachment to *her* has been *constant* and is *deep* founded on the best basis: that of *esteem*. . . . Annabella, I must confess, returns his attachment very sincerely.' Why not? Byron's love-letters (a meagre selection is printed by Mr. Prothero) are excellent in manner and tone and kind. When he wrote them, he was far and away the most brilliant and conspicuous figure in English letters; he had lived and loved and suffered; he was the poet of *Harold* i.-ii., the *Giaour*, the *Bride*, the *Corsair*, *Lara*, to say nothing of *English Bards*; his success among women was notorious; his beauty and wit and *prestance*, his dandyism, his violent anti-Toryism, had done almost as much for his reputation

as his poetry itself. Yet he writes to the little country blue-stocking, which was Miss Milbanke, in a strain of what I cannot but call affectionate humility, which would have gone home to the heart of (let us say) the ingenuous Mr. Thackeray. Indeed, knowing what I know of Thackeray, and reading what Lord Lovelace has transcribed from Byron, I can all-but figure the one great writer's account of the other. Byron is tired of ropery, dead-tired. *Das Lied ist aus.* He wants to make an end. His friends' wives have (as he somewhere says) done him no good. He wants a wife of his own. He has always believed that Miss Milbanke was the sole and only person; and, when he finds that at last—after refusing him—she owns that she 'reciprocates,' he is sorry for his post, he wishes he were better and worthier, he is moved to write in a strain that, as I have said, would certainly have agitated Thackeray's waistcoat. 'Tears,' he might have written, 'fill the honest fellow's eyes, as he thinks of his own unworthiness, and of the sweetness, the guileless innocence, the sacred purity,' etc. etc. etc. And it would all have been true. I grant that Byron was a rake; but

I wish to point out that no man can be a rake unless the other sex is art and part with him in the matter of his offence. More: I am credibly informed that raking is on the whole a tedious business, and that there comes a moment in the life of every practitioner of the art when reform and a 'pure woman' (which is conventional English for a home and a child or two) present themselves as the best in life. Well: Byron had reached that point; he had reached it partly by thinking of Miss Milbanke; he was convinced that all he needed was a chance, and that Miss Milbanke was the girl to give him that chance. So he wrote to her,—and such letters of his as we are privileged to see do him much honour. And she wrote to him—but we cannot say what her letters to him were like, for the simple reason that Mr. Prothero has none to show. In the end they were married, by special licence; a year and a fortnight after the wedding, Lady Byron left her husband never to return to him; and the great heart of the Public rose to the occasion. A Bride repudiating her Groom! A young mother fleeing the embrace of her firstborn's father! Obviously

he was the guilty party. Obviously she—young, innocent, high-principled, above all virtuous—was the victim. By specifying nothing, and so suggesting the unspeakable, she captured the general imagination, and set it working to her sole advantage. 'He is completely lost in the opinion of the world,' and 'I look upon him as given up to every worthless excess for the rest of his life':—thus Miss Godfrey to her friend, Thomas Moore; and, condemning on hear-say and in advance, the poor soul did but follow her Ladyship's suggested lead. There were so many of her way of feeling and thinking that an actress[1] could not take a turn in the country with her 'fancy man,' but it was thought that she had gone away with Byron, and on her reappearance she was hissed from the boards! It was a victory for the Virtuous Woman all along the line. As ever, she was a crown to her husband, but this time it was a crown of thorns. She

[1] Mrs. Mardyn, to wit. She went off with a lad of eighteen, a son of Dowton the actor. Old Dowton wanted to protest, but Byron peremptorily declined to recognise so contemptible a scandal. One Cruikshank etching, printed for public consumption, showed Mrs. Mardyn and two other ladies setting sail with Byron, while sailors jibe, and from the sea-banks her Ladyship, with Ada in her arms, considers the event. Another associated Byron with the Devil and a distant gallows.

had but to refrain from speaking, indeed, and one of the strongest, bravest spirits of our century was expelled his country. And none knew why she did it, nor how. And why she did it remains a mystery even till this day. But how she did it Mr. Prothero is able to let us see.

They were married,[1] as I said, on January 2, 1815—at Seaham, Durham; and they went to spend the honeymoon in Yorkshire. Returning to Seaham, they seem to have made the best of things, both for themselves and for their parents. 'Lady B. writes me word' (thus Augusta Leigh to Hodgson) 'she never saw her father and mother so happy; that she believes the latter would go to the bottom of the sea herself to find fish for B.'s dinner; that he (B.) owns at last that he is very happy and comfortable at Seaham, though he had *predetermined* to be miserable.' 'Tis true, his health is 'not very good,' but 'he seldom complains'; and 'both that and his spirits

[1] Writing in October 1814, Hodgson, afterwards Provost of Eton, describes a meeting with Byron at Cambridge; and, after telling of Byron on Miss Milbanke, and Byron on Miss Milbanke's money, and Byron's settlements on Miss Milbanke, 'Where, where,' he asks, 'are the hearts of those who can undervalue, who can depreciate, this man?'

have been improved by some daily walks she had prevailed on him to take.' Also, she 'attributes much of his languor in y^e^ morning and *feverish feels* at night to his long fasts, succeeded by too hearty meals for any one,' etc. Further, 'they had been playing the fool one evening, "old and young." B. dressed in Lady M.'s long-haired *wig* (snatched from her head for the purpose), his dressing-gown on turned wrong side out,' and 'Lady B. in his travelling-cap and long cloak with whiskers and mustachios.' A dreadful picture, truly! Indeed, since 'the most capricious poet, honest Ovid,' breathed out his soul among the Goths, there has been none like it. Harold snatching wigs! The Giaour in a dressing-gown the wrong side out! Tennyson (or Browning) buffooning in somebody else's head of hair! Mr. Arnold (or Tennyson) in——But no! An ounce of civet, good apothecary! Such fancies are impossible. To attempt them is merely to see how very far we are removed from a romping, bibulous Regency. All the same, the story was worth the telling; if only because it shows that the young couple (by this time she was Pippin to him and

he to her was Duck) were on the best and silliest of good terms. The inference that both bride and groom were all they ought to be at such a date is confirmed by Duck himself. In a letter to Moore (March 2, 1814) he is a little inclined to play the banished dandy; and, in effect, the differences between 'Father-in-law Sir Jacob' (as, with his absurd resolve to read Foote's farce into his life, he takes care to call Sir Ralph Milbanke) must certainly have been a little trying to the boon companion of Sheridan and Colman. But he isn't at all malignant—(indeed, the letters in this admirable third volume of Mr. Prothero's give you the impression that he was one of the best good-natured men that ever lived) —and in the end he takes leave of his experience in pleasant enough terms. 'I have been very comfortable here,' he writes to Moore (March 8, 1815), 'listening to that damned monologue, which elderly gentlemen call conversation, and in which my pious father-in-law repeats himself every evening—save one, when he played upon the fiddle. However, they have been very kind and hospitable, and I like them and the place vastly, and I hope they will live

many happy months.' As for his wife: 'Bell is *in health and unvaried good-humour and behaviour*'[1] (the italics are mine). That is the last of Seaham. Next day the couple left for Newmarket (Colonel Leigh's) and London. And on March 18th Mrs. Leigh, henceforth to be Goose to the Duck and Pippin of the other two, tells Hodgson that she thinks she 'never saw nor heard of a more perfect being' than Her Ladyship 'appears to be'; while, as for My Lord, who is 'looking particularly well,' he 'seems quite sensible of her value,' and 'as happy as the present alarming state of *public* and the tormenting uncertainties of his own private affairs will admit of.' Then come 13 Piccadilly Terrace, and the beginning of the end. 'I am sorry to say,' writes Mrs. Leigh again to Hodgson, 'his nerves and spirits are very far from what I wish

[1] Contrast the facts of the marriage as set forth in Mr. Prothero's pages with the absconded Pippin's plea to Hodgson:—'All this it is in his disposition to revenge on the object *if in his power*. When his revenge avowedly began as soon as I became so by marriage, and seems to have increased in force rather than diminished, what would it be *now*? Those who consider his welfare, ought not to desire my return': lest (the inference is) the ruffian Duck be moved to twist poor Pippin's neck, and sacrifice his own! *Cf.*, too, Her Ladyship's preposterous story to Lady Ann Lindsay.

them. . . . I think the uncomfortable state of his affairs is the cause; at least I can discern no other. He has every outward blessing,' etc. He had, no doubt. Yet in a year or so the hapless Duck was outward bound—the Pilgrim of Eternity. And the hand that thrust this greatness on him was —Pippin's.

The time in Piccadilly Terrace went both well and ill. Byron had no money and was up to his ears in debt; he had failed to sell Newstead, and he could get nothing out of his Rochdale property; he had married a fortune, and the Jews were continually at his haunches. We know not all that he was at home, but we have his own authority for saying that he was irritable and 'humorous,' that his habits were personal, that he brooded, and was ill-pleased with many things. All the same, both *Parisina* and *The Siege of Corinth* are the work of this year, and Pippin transcribes his MSS. for the printer; and Duck will not suffer his Pippin—who is in delicate health—to go much into society. Abroad, he talks and works as a member of the Drury Lane Committee, and he talks and works so well that, when

he leaves the theatre, not even an actor has quarrelled with him. Coleridge writes to him for help, is asked to write a tragedy, and—meanwhile—is strongly recommended to Murray; Sotheby and Maturin 'accost,' and their plays get all the backing he can give; Hogg and Hunt descend upon him, and he pleads their cause with Murray as it had been his own; Mackintosh approaches him (through Rogers) for help for Godwin, and he at once remembers that Murray has offered him a thousand guineas for *Parisina* and *The Siege* (which he has refused), and is all eagerness to strike the bargain, that he may send £600 to Godwin, and divide the balance (£450) between Coleridge and Maturin.[1] Meanwhile, however, Pippin has made up her mind about him, and has begun to take measures to be rid of him. It is obvious to her—or so she says—that he is mad; and a little before or after her lying-in she has broached the matter to Augusta, and has persuaded that excellent creature that, *Parisina* notwithstanding,

[1] It was Murray who prevented the transaction. Byron, in fact, was at this time so desperately driven for money, that he had to sell his books, etc., which Murray bought of him *en bloc* for £1500.

and despite the *Siege*, 'tis time the matter be most carefully considered. Then Ada Byron—'Ada, sole daughter of my house and heart'—is born (December 10, 1815); on January 8, 1816, Pippin has asked Dr. Baillie, 'as a friend,' to tell her whether Byron is or is not mad; a week after she leaves Piccadilly Terrace for Kirkby Mallory, her father's residence; next day, 'by medical advice,' she writes cheerfully and affectionately to her husband; and that is all. They never met again; and the next that Duck knew of Pippin was that she had taken his child from him, and purposed—strongly purposed—that he should never more set eyes on either of them. He never did. Byron the poet, Byron the dandy, Byron the *homme à femmes*, Byron the lover, Byron the husband and father—the little country blue-stocking was more than a match for them. Against them all she set her unaided wits, and against them all she scored; and scored so heavily that in France, and places where they know better, the name and fame of the British Female suffer for Pippin's achievement yet.

I do not mean to tell the story of her engineering. Enough to say that it was

grandly contrived and excellently done: that, having conceived her design, she put it through point by point — not faltering once, nor turning once from her main purpose. She began by suggesting insanity, and by saying that, if she were right, she would be reconciled. But she knew quite well that she could not possibly prove insanity; so she said at the outset that if she were wrong, then there could be no reconcilement, and that she must take steps to protect herself against the recurrence of —nobody knows what. Byron, sick to death (and who can blame him?) of such a monstrous experience,[1] most foolishly and quixotically declared that she might have her will, and be separated; but his friends said no, and he presently said ditto to his friends; and there were parleys and alarums and excursions. And Pippin stuck to her point so closely and so well that this might have been—not the first but—the fourteenth husband she desired to shed. And she

[1] What else to call it, in effect? This husband was discharged, 'without a character,' like a footman, after a year's trial! And, to the extent of a first-born, and £60,000 in settlements, he had duly fulfilled his part of the bargain, too!

shifted her ground continually; and, so far as one can see, she lied to everybody taken in the welter; much as she lied years afterwards to Lady Ann Lindsay, and years after that to poor old Beecher Stowe. And, at the last, when, in the face of all that her father had said and done in her behalf, it seemed to her advisers that reconciliation was both possible and desirable, she took the matter into her own hands, and went, alone, to Lushington, and told him—what? Nobody knows. Nobody but Lushington ever knew. Lushington died without telling it. She died without telling it. And we can get no further. Whatever it was, it made so great an impression on Lushington that, he said, he would have no hand in any attempt at smoothing over things. So, having challenged his adversary to come into court, and challenged her in vain, Byron signed the deed of separation, and departed on his pilgrimage. And with him went *Manfred* and *Harold* iii.-iv., and *Sardanapalus*, and *Cain*, and the *Vision*, and *Don Juan*—the one epic of modern life which has as yet got written. And he died at Missolonghi and was mourned by Walter Scott. And in the end it

was found that he had largely recreated European art.

As for his lady, she who in 1816 seemed so keen (yet was not nearly so keen as she seemed) to prove him mad, it is enough to say that she died in 1861, having lived to take on Robertson of Brighton as her spiritual director, to develop unseemly ideas about Augusta, and to confide those ideas to an American sensation-monger. A charitable explanation is that Pippin was a very plausible and moving yet a most mischievous and inexorable monomaniac: one who knew not when she did ill and lied, and when she did not. In other words, she was—as I see her—a piece of self-righteousness so complete, so assertive, so full of will and purpose and approval, that she had but to do ill to make her ill-doing virtue—but to utter a lie for her utterance to make her lie a truth. She married Byron, and she so put her talent out to use—that it is not nearly so difficult as it used to be to account for the 'cold heart and serpent smile' and the 'unfathomed depths of guile' of a famous passage in *Manfred*. I am not sure that it was not the best thing that she could have done—for Byron, for letters, for

the race. But there are times when I can't help wishing that she'd married some one else. Wordsworth, for instance. Wordsworth? It is pretty certain that, if she had, he, the impeccable, would have had plenty of opportunity to learn 'how awful goodness is'; while, as for his sister . . . O Dorothy, dear Dorothy—the very different sort of martyr you might be!

OTHELLO

I

IN 1622 'N. O.' printed for Thomas Walkly: 'and are to be sold at his Shop, at the sign of the Eagle and Child, in Brittan's Bursse': the 'Tragœdy of Othello the Moore of Venice,' as it had been 'divers times acted at the Globe and at the Black-Friars by his Maiestie's Servants.' This is the first *Othello*. 'To commend it I will not,' Walkly says; 'for that which is good I hope every man will commend, without entreaty; and I am the bolder because the Author's name is sufficient to vent his work.' Then, the year after (1623), came the First Folio; and in 1630 Walkly, who seems to have been in pocket by his earlier venture, published a Second Quarto. It is of no particular interest or importance: the text, as we have it, being Walkly *plus* Heminge and Condell, the First Quarto *plus* the First

Folio. The latter version is longer than Walkly's by some hundred and fifty lines; but the Walkly, printed (Mr. Herford conjectures) 'from an old copy of the play, as curtailed, and otherwise modified, for performance,' is very much richer in 'oaths and expletives' than the Heminge and Condell, and is therefore of respectable authority. As the first recorded performance of *Othello* is dated 1604: in the November of which year it was presented before the Court at Whitehall: and as the style, as beseems the subject, is 'simple, sensuous, and passionate' to the n^{th} degree: a style with memories of *Hamlet* yet with scarce a foretaste of *Macbeth*: it is assumed that 1604 was the birth-year of this unrivalled achievement in intimate, or domestic, drama, and that the text, as we have it, is very much the text that left Shakespeare's hand.

II

THE material is engagingly old and plain, at the same time that it is unalterably and essentially eternal. As stated recently by a critic, a critic, by the way, of the same name as the 'Moore's' first printer,

it is simply the story of what your Modern Frenchman has elected to denote and to discriminate as *un crime passionnel.* In Cinthio's *Hecatommithi,* where Shakespeare found the raw suggestion of his mighty and magnificent presentation of jealousy: of jealousy, too, in its operation on a mind which, rich in other sorts of experience, is, sexually speaking, next door to virginal: the passional crime is ever so much more persuasively paragraphed than it is in Mr. Walkley's amiable *boutade*; for in Cinthio the hero is not Othello (he is not so much, I believe, as named) but Iago, his Ensign, 'in love with Desdemona.' To that fair and innocent creature Cinthio's Antient imparts the purpose of his passion; she understands him not; he instantly conceives her enamoured of the party we know as Michael Cassio. So he goes to work, corrupts the Moor, plots Disdemona's death, and the Lieutenant's; and, in the end, after sandbagging the object of his passion into the other world in her husband's presence, pulling down the ceiling upon her broken body, and giving out that she has been killed by a fallen beam, turns on the Moor, accuses him of murder, gets him tortured and done

to death, and having thus justified his Renaissance habit, and purged himself of his *crime d'amour*, goes gallantly to justice on another count, and accepts the sweet compulsion of the Rope for another crime. It is in this rather blackguard story of a blackguard lecher's disappointment and revenge that our Archimage discovered his 'Othello.' He astonishes always, when you come to look into his treatment of other men's material. His method is ever royal: he lays hands on what he wants, and the fact that he wants it makes it his and none else's. I know not that, anywhere in his work, is there discovered so clear a proof of sovereignty as here. Othello, Iago, Cassio, Emilia, Desdemona—even the Handkerchief—all these figure in the twenty-seventh of the *Hecatommithi*. Yet to compare the *Novella* and the Play is to live in two worlds at once, and, so living, to be utterly and everlastingly cognisant of the inexpressible difference between creation as Cinthio understood and practised it, and creation as it was apprehended and done by William Shakespeare.

III

IN Cinthio's anecdote, or *compte-rendu*, the interest is almost wholly one of incident. The Novelist, or Reporter, is primarily concerned with—not character, nor action in its effect on character, but—action for its own sake, action as material for narrative. His Moor, his Lieutenant, his Desdemona, are counters all: such character-interest as he discovers is contained in his Antient; and he even is no more personal than any trim, literal incarnation of the clear-eyed, clean, self-seeking, ruthless, self-sufficing scoundrelism of Cesare Borgia would be. Cinthio's Antient is wholly lacking in those touches of doubt, those instants of inquiry, those hints and flashes of internal conflict, those glimpses of desperate debate between Mind and Appetite, between Brain and Temperament, which lend so potent and so variable a magic to the portraiture of that strange, brilliant, evil-speaking, evil-thinking, evil-doing 'demi-devil': that parcel-tamed, over-civilised man-eating tiger, which we know as Iago. He is Cinthio's hero: but in Cinthio his psychology remains obscure: in fact, we know as much and as

little of him as we know of the chief agent in any criminal affair which was reported yesterday. Stated in Police Court terms: he is a subaltern, who tries to lie with his General's wife; failing in his intent, he gets jealous of an airy rival; poisons his General's ear; has the satisfaction of bruising the lady of his desire to death—as a positive confirmed whore too!—in the eye of him he'd fain have cuckolded; experiences a wolfish joy in the death of that once potential horned beast; and, in the end, is himself sent down to the Pit on quite other grounds than poor Disdemona's broken breast-bone and spine, and with never so much as a memory or a thought of the cuckold that was not to be, whom he had escorted to the bounds of Space and Time with every circumstance of miserableness and hate. That is pretty much as he half exists in the *Hecatommithi*: for the simple reason that Cinthio, having made him play his part, with supreme success, in the affairs of Disdemona and the Moor, as a good enough Renaissance Italian, a Cesare Borgia on the smallest scale, was content to ask no more of him, but to let him end even as in an enlightened Italy such small change of

Machiavelli's ideal Prince might end, and very often did. In *Othello* all this is changed: Iago quits the Police-Court (so to say) for the purlieus of Humanity at large, and, instead of depending for immortality on the word of a mere reporter, is taken up, and shaken, and squeezed, and made to know something of himself, and to make that much of himself, and a great deal besides, intelligible to others, by the greatest *manieur d'hommes* that ever lived. The result is such an exemplary presentation of active, motiveless, and militant wickedness as Balzac, say—the Balzac of Philippe Bridau and Cousin Betty—has not so much as approached.

IV

IS it quite made out? I am reluctant to determine. I think it is; but I have to admit that, if it be, the achievement is accomplished largely by means of soliloquy: an expedient in dramatic art abominable to the play-going mind. Yet was it a common device with Shakespeare, to whom its practice saved much trouble: nay, made things possible which in its absence

could not have been essayed. Accepting it for the compromise it is, you may say, I think, that, thanks to its use, Iago is entirely credible. Despite the majestic assurance and completeness of his presentment as a chief actor in the play, we should not know him as we do if we were denied the privilege of sitting with him in the privy chamber of his thought, and taking our fill, and more, of those terrible mental practices by which he seeks, in the dry light of an excellent and daring intelligence, to reconcile his action with his conscience, his processes with his results, and, half in earnest, half in jest, as it were to excuse himself before his soul. He is a piece of pure intellect: he has gaiety, wit, invention, a kind of lethal humour; he is versed in 'politic authors,' and, besides, he is deeply read in the books of Character and Life, so that he knows all qualities of human dealing with 'most learned spirit'; he discovers in himself a fine observer, a shrewd and gluttonous critic; first and last he is high in resolve, deep of heart, swift and resolute of hand; as to speech he is liberal to the point of intemperance, with an odd trick of obscenity, whether suggested or phrased, which he has

practised till it has mastered him, and in which the World, if it were but wise, would find proof indubitable of the inherent baseness of his mind. Said a fine critic to me long years ago, in the great Salvini times: 'You may meet Iago on any Yorkshire racecourse'; and, the inevitable mutations duly made, I take the remark to be intrinsically just. Palmer of Rugely, the poisoning creature, was of Iago's type and strain; and the Ring breeds many such potential beasts of prey. These are the men who kill, and are half surprised and half angered to find, as they generally do, that Killing is called *Murder*, is an offence before the Law, and has to be expiated on the Gallows. These wretches play with Evil much as a young man plays with Life; and are just as sorry for themselves when they come to the unchanging end.

For the rest, Iago, like his kind at large, is wholly the creature of the Event he quickens and stage-manages. He gulls Roderigo, he gulls Cassio, he gulls Othello into killing Desdemona, and essaying to compass his Lieutenant's murder. But, though he never so much as suspect it, the mortal issue he has made imminent, masters him ever, and,

being determined, leaves him the most wretched slave this side Eternity. He starts by 'guying' an aged and respectable Senator on a most delicate and peculiar point of honour, in terms so rank that Shakespeare himself, good as he was at filth (and none better ever lived), has not improved on them; he ends as the murderer whole or parcel-gilt of Othello, Desdemona, Roderigo, and Emilia, with a bad wound in his body, the assurance of being done to death, and the knowledge that, thanks to him, the Cassio he so miserably loathed and scorned is Governor of Cyprus. For all his vocabulary and for all his brains, his contempt for elementary human law is ever too strong for him. He makes the best of circumstances he can; he wins his points; he is always alert, maleficent, superior to his opportunity; and in the long-run he is found to be merely the peer of the Hogarthian Thomas Idle.

V

BUT, to make a play, it is not enough to present Intelligence at odds with Morals. For, as was long since pointed out

to me by my dear friend Fleeming Jenkin, the staple of Drama is Emotion. 'You must have Incident,' he argued, in his fine, logical way, 'or your Emotion will not be Strong; you must have Character, or it will not be Interesting; you must have Style, or your presentation of it, whatever it be, will not be Literature.' But, if you lacked all these (the contention was) you might stagger through, and grip your audience, and achieve your end, if only you had Emotion. Dumas *père*, though Jenkin knew it not, had said the same thing years before. There was an essential difference, he remarked, between himself and Hugo, 'le Penseur' (so the loyal old Artist called the greatest Liar in all Drama), and the difference consisted in this: Hugo could do nothing in the play-writing way without what one may call the fripperies of drama, —Horns of Hernani, Tombs of Charlemagne, 'Soupers à Ferrare,' Choruses of Monks, Coffins, Thunder and Lightning, Ruined Castles, and the like; whereas all *he* wanted was 'four trestles, four boards, two actors, and a passion.' 'Tis the briefest, the most comprehensive, the most luminous statement of the essentials of drama that ever, I

believe, was made; and it fits the *Othello* of Shakespeare as it fits the Æschylean *Oresteia* like a glove.

Scene by scene and act by act, the Moor of Venice moves with an irresistible stride to an inevitable end; 'tis a lasting and affecting proof, if any proof were needed, that the 'well-made play' did not begin with 'Antony' and 'la Tour de Nesle'; it shows that the Sardou formula and the Ibsen formula were mere matters of to-day, and that here at least is a point at which the Sophocles of the *Œdipus* might take hands with Shakespeare, and own that, his own masterpiece, all radiant and serene as it appears, is no greater nor more splendid an achievement in design, in construction, in effect, than this. This is another way of saying that, Iago apart, the interest of *Othello* is entirely and unalterably emotional. You might play it in a barn, and it would still fulfil itself; for the singular reason that here, wherever you look, are old Dumas' 'two actors and a passion,' and that what Jenkin called the 'emotion' is never absent. The actors change: are now Othello and Iago, now Desdemona and Emilia, now Othello and Desdemona, now Emilia and

Othello, now Othello and Fate, the tremendous, the inevitable: even Death. But the passion persists: it shifts its quality as the Master wills, takes on the hues, speaks with the voice, dares with the furiousness of love and hate and jealousy and misery and murder and despair. But, once evoked, it never lets go of your throat; and this is what makes *Othello* the play of plays it is. I think that *Lear* is bigger, as being more elemental (let us say); I think that *Hamlet* is certainly more subtle, more engaging, more romantic; I think that in *Measure for Measure* and *Macbeth*, perhaps, too, in *Troilus*, we get more of such vital and undisguisable essentials as went to the making of our Prospero-Proteus, our Man of Men, our Chief of Poets. But nowhere in his achievement has he discovered a greater capacity, a clearer insight, a more assured and royal method, than here. Of course, he plundered Cinthio; but who was Cinthio that he should not be plundered? And of what effect were Cinthio now—he, and his Antient, and his Lieutenant, his Moor, and his Disdemona—had he not been translated, and glorified, and eternised in terms of very Shakespeare?

VI

TRAGEDY is an abstraction of life at its quintessential points; its passages of high-climbing, inoubliable, annihilating rapture; its supreme moments of envy, hate, wrath, misery, suspicion, lust, despair. And Shakespeare, the great 'Abstractor of Quintessences,' accomplished no more splendidly difficult task in all the years of his tremendous and triumphing achievement than when he made his Moor, not merely plausible, but entirely human and credible. It has been, and perhaps still is, objected to this august and immortal thing, that Othello is too 'easily moved'; that his ear is too wide, that is, his mind too prompt, his heart too eager to entertain suspicion; and that he is so readily satisfied in the matter of proof that he might give points to such typical exemplars of horndom as Arnolphe in *l'Ecole des femmes* and the Sganarelle of *le Cocu imaginaire*. These objections have, of course, been traversed, and traversed to so complete a purpose that I note them only for the form's sake, and with never a thought of going back on them. 'Tis enough to note

that Tragedy, being a quintessentialised abstraction of life in its most desperate potentialities, has its own convention, and is governed by none but its own rules, and that to begin upon the examination of an exemplary piece of tragedy by questioning the propriety of that convention were to make Criticism impossible. To accept the Tragic Convention is to find the character of Othello an 'entire and perfect crysolite' among creations: an achievement in presentation which Shakespeare himself has not surpassed; a study in passion-wrought character in which the last is said. 'Tis as it were a soul in earthquake and eclipse; and there is never a detail, never a touch of the cataclysm, however variable and minute, but is realised and recorded with so consummate an artistry, an intelligence so abounding, so complete, and so assured, that the issue savours of inspiration.

VII

IT is history that J.-B. Poquelin, called Molière, wrote for his company, and that, cutting his parts to his actors and actresses much as a modern snip cuts you

his 'tailor-mades' and his 'suits' to the physical idiosyncrasies of his customers, female and male, succeeded, being an accomplished and very admirable master in this sort of sartorials, not only in fitting his customers but, also, in founding and establishing a tradition: a tradition, too, of such comprehensive and enduring potency that, in its shadow, Coquelin *aîné* plays Scapin much as Molière played Scapin, while Agnès (say) and Horace are to this day presented in the same terms, on the same level, so far as is possible in the same spirit as were imposed by J.-B. Poquelin on le Sieur Lagrange and on that brilliant and beautiful Mlle. de Brie, of whom 'tis told that, at sixty, she was still the best Agnès of them all. Now, Molière was the greatest Actor-Manager[1] that ever lived; but it is obvious that Shakespeare, being a person of (shall I say?) considerable intelligence, anticipated him in this matter, and, having a great actor, Burbage to wit, in his company, wrote as carefully and as joyously for him as, long years after, le Sieur Poquelin wrote for Molière and Lagrange

[1] That he wrote his best for himself and his temporary woman, or 'leading lady,' is but to say that he was a Manager-Actor in the fullest sense of the term.

and de Brie. I would go so far as to say that had Dick Burbage—a Stratford man, too!—been of another temperament than he was, and lacked the strange, romantic, passionate face he had, there had been differences in Richard, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, as we have them, and that they who would fain present the dramatist from his plays would do well to look carefully and keenly into the intellectual and emotional quality of his chief of actors. But such argument is not for here nor now; and I end with this reflection: 'This afternoon, at the Globe Theatre, First Performance of "Othello, the Moore of Venice"; Othello, Master Richard Burbadge.' *Othello?* with Burbage 'up,' and Shakespeare prompting him from the wings? What a *première*!

'T. E. B.'[1]

I

THE MAN

IT was in 1860 that I knew him first; and the occasion of my knowing him was this. The old Crypt Grammar School had been founded in 1509—or was it 1519? —by a burgess of the City, one John Cooke;[2] had served its term, so far as 'certain poor boys' were concerned, for many years; had gone to wreck and confusion, and ceased

[1] *Letters of Thomas Edward Brown, Author of Fo'c'sle Yarns.* Edited, with an Introductory Memoir, by Sidney T. Irwin. (London: A. Constable and Co., Ltd., 1900.) In two volumes.

[2] He is buried in the Cathedral, he and his wife Joan; and there is a monument to them in the nave of that noble fane which I have considered many times, and can see before me as I write. It is in the wall, and, if I mistake not, is railed off from the general. In the centre is a lozenge with an appropriate inscription; and on the right hand of the lozenge, in an attitude of prayer, is John Cooke, in the costume of the period, and behind him in a *diminuendo*, a sort of vanishing quantity, are his eight sons, all kneeling, and all costumed, and all praying. And on the left hand of the lozenge is Joan

from fulfilling its purpose for many others; had come into the hands of divers persons having authority, and had by them been purged of its iniquities, and given a fresh start in life, with a sufficient income, and a great capacity for useful work among the offspring of the middling and the lower middle-classes. I do not know its history in detail; but I imagine it to have been badly misgoverned and mishandled, and to have fallen so low that only on reform and change from the foundations upwards could there be any hope for it. Well, reform it got, and change—as absolute, both, as the Chancery Commissioners could give; and they set the seal upon their work by the discovery and appointment of a competent staff. In the attainment of this object they succeeded perfectly; and the best of their gift, though the City knew it not, was the headmaster. He was not more than thirty; his career had been one of exceptional and peculiar brilliancy; he was a double-first

his wife, also in the costume of the period; and behind her, in a *diminuendo*, a sort of vanishing quantity, are her seven daughters. As a small boy, I looked much at them: wondering, especially, if they went on like that in real life. Also how, if they (the eight sons) dressed like that, they escaped being stoned in Gloucester streets.

(Classics and Modern History); he had a gift of exciting and a gift of teaching. Unfortunately for us, the boys he might have shaped and trained, he was also a man of character and genius; and, as I now know, his patience had been somewhat hardly tried during the time of his servitorship at 'the House.' He was intolerant of interference—especially such futile interference as he must endure; he was contemptuous of comment—above all, such ignorant and pettifogging comment as he got. His critics were impudent; I think they thought he was going to run the school on *Pinnock* and *Mangnall's Questions*, and the like, and were disgusted beyond measure to find that he meant his boys to have decent books—books which cost money, and could not be done without. He, on his part, was insolent, as he had every right to be, considering the stamp and quality of his assailants; and that he stooped to their level, and did battle with them in the local prints, is, as I now see, a proof that he was uncomfortable from the first, and could in nowise realise the kind of illiteracy—vain, fat-witted, beery, excessively conservative—into whose midst he

had descended.[1] Be this as it may, he was a failure, and in Mr. Irwin's memoir his passage through the sleepy grey city of my birth, his conduct of the old Crypt School is referred to merely as 'the Gloucester episode.' That he hated the memory is plain; and it may be that I wrong his noble ghost in treating of it as I have done. But I do not think so. It is a platitude that everything depends on the point of view. And I am fain to say that his point of view is not mine. From his, 'the Gloucester episode' was, I take it,

[1] The point is, that he had to deal with the sons of a class which hated scholarship, and knew nothing of letters. He would have been, I take it, less out of his element at the Cathedral School, whereat there was an atmosphere of reading, a tradition of the humanities (so to speak): where the mortar-board (if I may so put it) had been worn for generations, so that when we of the Crypt began to go abroad in that head-gear, the Cathedral School boys mixed and intertwined their tassels with blue, to distinguish themselves from us, the upstarts, who had laid hands on the hitherto inviolable black. Brown's misfortune—(it might so well have been his opportunity!)—was that he had to create a tradition, and that time and his material were against him. As to his material: when he was last with me he recalled the performance of a youth, who—(the Head and his assistants had to teach us cricket!)—being sent out to field, protested, to the master in charge, in these terms:—'Look 'ere, Sur, what I wants to know is, when 'll it be my turn to *knawck*.' As to time, perhaps he was impatient. But, given his temperament could he have been aught else?

an unpleasing and ridiculous experiment. From mine, it was an unqualified success: since it made him known to me, and opened to me ways of thought and speech that—— well! since it came upon me like a call from the world outside—the great, quick, living world—and discovered me the beginnings, the true materials, of myself.[1]

'Tis wellnigh forty years ago that the revelation came to me; and that it came through him has ever been a joy to mind and heart. That it came to me here and there—in broken lights, at odd moments, on remote occasions—that neither is, nor has ever been, anything to the purpose. The matter of that purpose is that he was T. E. B., the man of genius—the first I'd ever seen; and that, being so, he took hold upon me with a grip he never knew, and led me out into the nearer distances—into the shadows at the edge of the great sea—to a point I might never have reached without him. What he did for me, practically, was to suggest such possibilities in life and

[1] Thus (the italics are mine)—thus another pupil, Mr. H. F. Brown:—'He was a "widener." He made one feel that there was something beyond the school, beyond successful performance at lessons or at games; *there was a whiff of the great world brought in by him.*'

character as I had never dreamed. He was singularly kind to me[1] at a moment when I needed kindness even more than I needed encouragement. The occasion was an examination; I did surprisingly well—without knowing it; he rejoiced in the effect, and did what he could to reward me for my share in it. The names were called, and mine—mine!—was once and again the first: to the astonishment, it may be the disgust, of the listening benches; and after that, the school dismissed, there was an interview. Shall I ever forget its meanest circumstance? I trow not; and the thing is, that he forgot it no more than I, but spoke of it the last time I saw him—a year or two before he died. I could not follow him far on that occasion. Old memories were too much for me. It was close on forty years since it had happened; an infinite deal of water had gone under the bridges in the meanwhile; life had had its fill of pupil and master both, and there had been joy and achievement and trouble for both master and pupil, and it may be that

[1] Much as the Regius Professor, Jacobson, had been kind to him at Oxford—and, *mutatis mutandis*, on the same grounds; but the gift of books was of infinitely greater consequence in my case than Jacobson's had been in his.

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death had drawn us closer to each other than all else. Yet he remembered that interview, and would fain have spoken of it. I was younger—much younger—than he, and could say nothing. I meant to have it out with him the next time; but there was none. When, in due course, he came again to England, I got a joyous letter from him from Cardiff, dilating gaudily upon a certain essay on Robert Burns, which (it appeared) had filled him with pride and happiness. But he got no farther than Clifton. There the brave, brilliant, helpful life fell on a sudden and a happy close. There the amazing temperament, the great heart, the thrice-filled brain, the inexhaustible and unfailing gift of sympathy, the infinite understanding of things human which went to the making of that unique thing, 'T. E. B.'—there, I say, these gifts lapsed, and he passed into the past. There are many, very many living, on whose lives his mark is indelible. There are many, not so many, not nearly so many, nearer to him than those others, to whom the world can never again be the world they knew when he walked its ways with them. I take leave to say that there is none in either lot

but thanks God for his presence, and is happier and stronger in the thought of what he was and said and did.

Scholar and humorist; poet and teacher and priest; a notable and lavish temperament, quite excellently disciplined and equipped; a born writer and a born observer—of such bountiful differences as these was 'T. E. B.' In some sort, they had his best who knew him day by day and year by year, and were privileged to make out life with him; for, at any rate, they had his voice, his eyes, his presence, his talk, the strengthening and comforting effect of his friendship. Such triumphs of humanity there are — such exemplars of the Pure Creature — whose influence ends with their removal from the stage whereon they have played the brilliant and distinguished part for which our mother Nature cast them at the moment of their birth. They are miracles; but they pass. They are lights against the dark; but their place must one day know them no more, and where they flashed and wavered and shone there is presently the blackness of the eternal night. They are like Byron as he appeared, the end being

come and a new point of view being necessary, to Thomas Carlyle; craters empty of flame and beset with ashes and snow. Not of these was the man of whom I speak. Mr. Irwin tells you that he had all the brilliancy, all the grave and riotous gaiety, all the grace and force and charm, of the ideal talker; and there is none that knew him, I take it, who will not agree. But that was only the beginnings of him: that was merely the man in his everyday aspect, as he showed, and could not choose but show himself, in the act of paying his way through life. But, for our good fortune, who did not and could not rejoice in his neighbourhood, he had a vast deal more than that. As I have said, he was a born writer and observer; and he poured himself out alike in prose and verse. Of his verses I shall say nothing on this page, except that I esteem them for as personal and as exhaustive an expression of life[1] as the second half of the century has seen. As to his

[1] What else is Poetry? Surely poetry is an expression of life, or it is nothing? Matthew Arnold, I know, declared it to be 'a criticism of life,' and naught besides. But in this description there is more moralist than critic, and perhaps more Matthew Arnold—a writer ever with a point to make or a paradox to float—than either.

prose, here, to speak for itself, is an instalment of it in the shape of certain letters, selected and edited by Mr. S. T. Irwin, one of his closest friends, who contributes (by the way) a memoir of T. E. B., which, in its modest, unassuming way, is an achievement—in tact, reticence, taste. Speaking for myself, I think it impossible for us to have too much of the very lovable and remarkable man I have been trying to put on to paper. I want all the letters to be had; and I want all, or nearly all, the articles which he was good enough to write for *The National Observer* and *The New Review*.[1] And especially I want the letters. Mr. Irwin's selection is excellent, so far as it goes. But I want more. I want T. E. B. in his fighting humour—as, in these volumes, he appears in his remarks on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; I want T. E. B. as he looked when he rent and tore and trampled; I want especially more of T. E. B. the musician and the critic of music.[2] It is possible—even

[1] One of Mr. Irwin's correspondents notes of T. E. B. the Christ Church servitor—('tis incredible; but a servitor he was, and a servitor at Christ Church, till he became a fellow of Oriel)—that he delighted in such books as Anthony à Wood's. He was busy on an *Anthony à Wood* for me and *The New Review*, when he died.

[2] Mr. E. M. Oakeley contributes an addendum to Mr.

probable—that I shall be left wanting. For the world that reads is, after all, a frivolous, not to say an uninstructed world; and the T. E. B. of these *Letters* is, despite his immense humanity and his admirable alertness, his immitigable felicity of phrase, a master apart: a writer, that is, who is looking, not so much for a public here and now as, for the high place which must be his in the shining and immortal hierarchy of English Literature.

I do not propose to analyse these scraps of life—these fragments, now passionate and now humorous, now radiant and serene, now melancholy and profound, now doubting and limited, which Mr. Irwin has recovered from the epistolary life of my dear dead friend and honoured master. Still less do I propose to find a place in English for them; though, for myself, I think that

Irwin's memoir which is sorely disconcerting in its suggestiveness—and its insufficiency. So far as I can see, on one line of musical criticism you might look for the nearest to Brown in Berlioz: both being poets as well as musicians; though Brown could turn from realising Beethoven to be Tom Baynes, which Berlioz, of course, could not. And Wagner —I can't be certain what Brown thought of the *Parsifal*. I can see that he hated the 'lewd and superfluous naughtiness' of the scenic imposture; but what did he think of the music? I gather that—— But no! I won't—I will *not*—till I know.

they suggest both Byron and Stevenson at their best, and that as to these two—both moderns, both poets, both writers,—well, here is Brown, with more heart than either, perhaps, and, certainly, a more even brilliancy, a larger set of interests, a riper wisdom, a richer and kindlier sense of the world's beauty and the essential graciousness of human life; and they who read can do their sorting for themselves. The great thing is that they who read should be many and fit. For these are the letters of a man of genius; and men of genius are rarer than you might believe.

II

THE POET [1]

WE are told that to many he was only a local poet, a person who rhymed in dialect—a kind of beggar at Apollo's gate; and we are told by academic persons—things made after supper at the Muses' table out of a melon rind—that he was one

[1] *The Collected Poems of T. E. Brown.* London: Macmillan.

affected and unskilled in letters. We are told, too, that to a friend who feigned to condole with him for that his name was not found in a certain list of minor poets, 'Perhaps,' he said—'perhaps I am among the majors?' A Major Poet! 'Tis a magnificent assumption, a 'great perhaps,' indeed; yet to read this Complete Edition of his verse is to be with him heart and soul. I knew it all before; and I have taken it all again; and I will avow my conviction that when I wrote of it as 'the fullest expression of life' we of these late years have been privileged to consider and enjoy, I stated a truth so baldly and so niggardly that my statement clamours for enhancement. The *Letters* have shown what manner of man Brown was—how personal, how many-sided, how humorous and intense; how rich in sentiment, yet how rich in farce; how brilliantly and variously lettered, and how inalterably humane; how strong in discipline, how quick with the defensive spirit, yet how riotously accidental, how beautifully unpedantic. Well, to state that that particular Brown unpacked his heart in words, and here they are—to state this, I say, should be enough for all them that have

the sense of character and the right delight in letters. Brown was ever so many things: scholar, talker, mimic, *farceur*, preacher, teacher, schoolmaster, musician, lover of nature, lover of man; yet of his very essence, before all these differences, before the talker and the mimic even, there was the man of letters, there was the artist in style. To his father (so he tells you) style was like the instinct of personal cleanliness. To himself it was that and something more: it was a part of his birthright, the master-jewel in his inheritance. To think of him beggared of any one or two of his many gifts is hard. To think of him without his literary faculty is impossible. This volume is a proof of it. The contents fall naturally into two parts; on the one hand are the verses in English—they are models of English verse; on the other are the poems in dialect, and of them it is not too much to say that they are unique. The great exemplar is Burns, whose achievement is a culmination, and whose genius as it were focusses all the vocal talent of a race. But I think it could be shown, and shown easily, that there is nothing to compare in Burns to the wealth of life and humour and fancy that is

packed into these *Fo'c's'le Yarns* of Brown's; while in the matter of style, the sovran quality, the Manxman, with his immense vocabulary, his notable feeling for words, his high and fine sense of literature —the Manxman, I say, has nothing to learn of the Scot. Burns, however, has his tradition, and 'tis over a century old already; while Brown is even of them that died o' Wednesday, and his tradition, which he created, is all in front of him; so that 'tis idle, on the face of it, to build comparisons between the two. But to place a good thing one cannot but approach the best; and in Brown's case, far more than in most others, none but the best will serve. For the rest, my appeal to Burns will, I doubt not, move many to laughter in these days, and many to wrath. That is in the nature of things. Fifty years hence the comparison will seem less arbitrary than now, and the conclusion will certainly be held not nearly so impavid as it reads to-day.

In any case here is a poet who is also a man, and who writes, whether in fine English or in the 'asynartete octosyllables' of Tom Baynes, like a master; so that his work, whether in English or in Manx,

should go straight to the brain and heart of everybody that loves good poetry. That it will do so at once I do not for one moment believe. The manner is too personal, the man too instant, too intent on himself or on what he has to say, too violent, and also too clean-spoken, too desperately given to have nothing dubitable in his utterance. At a first glance, he has a kind of likeness to Browning. But come to intimacy, and the shadow flees, the likeness dislimns; you find that the one man does where the other man has but feigned, that books and life have been to the one what books alone were to the other, that the one knew and postulated while the other—curious, eager, impertinent for the most part, mainly inarticulate—only groped and fumbled after knowledge, and was content to fumble and grope in speech as he had done before in thought. All the same there remains a likeness; and, time and again, in reading Brown, you come upon a fancy, an image, half-beautiful and half-grotesque, but realised —realised to the last touch of down on the feather, so to say :—

> This sea was Lazarus, all day
> At Dives' gate he lay,

> And lapped the crumbs.
> Night comes;
> The beggar dies:
> Forthwith the Channel, coast to coast,
> Is Abraham's bosom, and the beggar lies
> A lovely ghost:—

till you rub your eyes as you read, and think:—'Hallo! here's Browning, doing it—but doing it!—doing it as he never did it before!' As to their gospel, it is substantially the same. But Browning preaches it, even 'local-preaches' it, as in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and *Cleon*, and that *Death in the Desert* in which he seeks—a strange ambition, surely!—to convert Strauss—or is it Renan?—to the turn of thought and the way of belief of good, fair-living, high-thinking Clapham. Brown's, on the other hand, is blazoned or implied in all he does; and in all he does the Teacher and the Poet are one. 'Tis a true man's optimism that bears him up and through and on: there is nothing servile about it, nothing slavish, nor spasmodical, nor pot-valiant. He lives and does and suffers—ah, how he suffers![1] But if there

[1] See *Aber Stations* and the thrice-admirable *Epistola ad Dakyns*, and the daring, the grotesque, the wonderful and taking *Dartmoor: Sunset at Chagford* (a piece he never revised for press), with many things besides.

be wailing and gnashing of teeth, there is always the man behind; and in the man there is always the optimist: and the lesson to be learned from both is constant and inalterable. As for Tennyson, he imitates that unrivalled writer of verses a little languidly, a little distantly in *Bella Gorry*. But when, when can we imagine our unrivalled writer of verses telling such a story as Bella Gorry's? Having all his work before us, the answer is easy. And the answer is, in one word, 'Never.' He could never have told such a story, because, in despite of *Rizpah*, he was never interested —not really interested—in maternity, but only in the processes, charming or not, by which maternity becomes possible. Brown, however, has done the thing—'Nursing the baby!' So Parson Gale—for all time; and has done it in verse which in its languid intolerance of difficulties is, while entirely self-sufficing, by no means a bad criticism of Tennyson's own. That for the larger lines, the big outward semblances: when it comes to comparisons, achievements, intricacies, I think there is scarce one alive (so besotted am I in my view of the reading Briton!)—I think there is scarce one alive

who reads verse habitually, and knows the difference between truth and falsehood, but will prefer Brown's *Chalse a Killy* before the old, thrice-laurelled Laureate's *May Queen*. Tennyson makes a petty, sentimental picture, and runs you on a May Queen that never could have been in any circumstances regnant on this globe. Brown, on the other hand, takes his Chalse, and carries him through all sorts of strange, ridiculous experiences :—

> And I did play upon a comb :—

and makes you love and pity him long or you are done with the verse in which he 's celebrate. Surely in the presence of such a brave, pathetic reality the May Queen, with Robin, and the silver-haired parson, and the garden-tools ('upon the grannary floor') even the matchless touches of dumb nature :—

> When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
> On the oat-grass, and the sword-grass, and the bullrush in the pool :—

surely these are nothing? I am speaking still of Brown's English verses. But if I turn to dialect, and bring out the incompar-

able *Mater Dolorosa*, where, I ask, is Tennyson then? 'Tis but thirty to forty lines of half-Manx, half-English speech; it is only the wail of a woman with her true time gone for nothing, and her weary womb, and her baffled breast clamant—clamant! Yet out of this book of Brown's I look for its like in vain.

He loved to live. It was good to him to be himself alive, and to steep himself in life as it was revealed to him in the breathing, sentient, passionate environment of which he was the centre. There is scarce one of these English poems of his but is the cry of a living man. However strait and severe its form, the soul of it tingles and throbs with being; and where the utterance is personal—as in the *Epistola*, and *Aber Stations*, and the *Sunset at Chagford*—the effect is poignant in the extreme. There are moments, indeed, when that odd confession of his, 'I am a born sobber,' recurs to your mind with an insistence that is not wholly agreeable: when you pause, in fact, to wonder to what heights of self-revelation he would have risen had he *not* been the artist, above all the humorist he was. I believe that, in his heart of hearts, he was

not averse from 'wallowing naked in the pathetic'; but I am sure that, if this were so, his inexhaustible humour, his fine sense of things as they are, that solemn and chastened joy in the Abstract Fool which he confesses that he had, his abounding humanity, his unending interest in the comedy of life—these kept him straight. And thus it was that, if times there came, when he let himself go, and made as if he beat out his heart against the wires of the cage in which, by God's will (that was an essential in his theory of the world), he was cabined, he was never so lost to good literary manners that the glimpse of a landscape or the consciousness of a character could not, and did not, call him back to his greater and better self. Man and nature, nature and man, romantically and humorously considered: these, in fact, were the two elements in the scene in which he exulted with a right sense of mastery. And it is to note that he selected neither, but took them both as they came to him, like the strenuous optimist he was. God had made things so, and therefore things were to be accepted and treated as God made them: the rough with the smooth,

storm with shine, the harlot with the maid, what ought to be but isn't with what shouldn't have been but is. Hence, I take it, his indefatigable interest, whether humorous or tragic, in the thing called character. He wanted it, anyhow and anywhere; but he preferred it as it is: not altogether good nor altogether bad. If he light on a kind of saint—as in Parson Gale—he does him all the honour he can; but all the reverence he shows for Parson Gale and all the delight he has in Parson Gale do not for a moment prevent him from telling the squalid underside of the Parson's life with Mrs. Gale (*Christmas Rose*). It is just this blessed gift of seeing people as they are, and not as they ought to be, which makes Brown the man of men, and so the poet among poets that he is. Take *Peggy's Wedding*, for instance, and you will see at once that it is imitated from Swift; but you will also see, if you have any taste of letters in you, that it is infinitely better art than Swift's, in that it gives you, with a touch of farce perhaps, but with not so much as the hint of a departure from the big lines of human nature, two characters whom you have never met before, but whom you will know to

your dying day. And that sequence of portraitures called *In the Coach*—is there anything like them elsewhere? And is there any fault to find with them for what they are? And the *Mater Dolorosa*—the poor, half-articulate creature, with her frustrated instinct, and her aching bosom, and her reeling brain—who is there, as I said before, that has done the like for us? Not Tennyson, or *he had been* an even greater poet than he is; and not Browning, or *he'd have reeled* you off some fifty pages of blank verse, with a cry or two here and there, and a dagger or a bowl to wind up withal. Societies would certainly have raged together over the discrepancy between what the heroine said and what her historian obviously intended to have it thought she meant; and, about these high matters, we might, were the poet still alive, be fighting, fighting evermore. That, though, is not Brown's way at all. He does not sit down to write—or, rather, half-write—the facts, and all the facts that develop from them, and all the developments from those developments, as nearly exhibited as a flux of words and a partial understanding of the central circumstance will permit.

Not a bit of it. Forty lines or so, and his effect is complete. *He* deals with nothing but essentials; and his *Mater Dolorosa* is an achievement apart in our various and noble literature. That it 's the result of 'wallowing' as aforesaid may be cheerfully conceded. Stevenson did not so wallow: knowing his own talent as he knew it—and he knew it as a runner knows his pace, or a cricketer his best hit—he was certainly right. But Shakespeare did; so did Dickens; so did Scott. And I conceive that Brown, could we but come at him now, would far rather sin with these—Scott, Dickens, Shakespeare, to name no more—than be saved with Stevenson.

The moral of this, however, is by the way: is only polemic, literary polemic—polemic, that is, which is found at the end to have its source, its roots, its 'strong foundations' in the quality called *taste*, and is therefore a thing disputable by everybody who does not happen to see eye to eye, or rather to feel stomach and stomach with the original opinionist. In the circumstances it is better to go on with the consideration of Brown the poet, and especially the poet of

's'le Yarns, the rough-and-ready verses,[1] which he expressed, not merely all the ıxman in him but also, all his humour, his passionate love of nature, all his ınrıvalled sense of character, all his theory of life and the world and time, and therewith as much of the experience and the results, observed and apprehended, of his long and varied and peculiar life as the number of lines he wrote would hold. It is in some sort to their disadvantage that they are written in dialect; for the public which reads verse is easily frightened from its purpose, and had far liefer read plain English than (let us say) good Scots: so that, other qualities apart, Burns—even Burns!—can never capture or control in any latitude south of his own midden a fortieth, even a five-hundredth, part of that public—many-mooded, indiscriminating, fulsome—which is as it were the natural inheritance of Byron or Tennyson, or even Keats. And the worst is, that Brown being a convinced and resolute

[1] So they seem. But to look carefully into their structure and consider the means by which they achieve their effect is to see that they are a result of conscious and deliberate art.

artist, the public gets no help from him. He does not write Manx as Barnes wrote Dorsetese: he does not, that is, write English verses with a local accent, but otherwise with 'two gowns and everything handsome about them.' On the contrary, his syntax and his prosody are the island's own, and he will bate you no ace of her claim to be heard on her own peculiar conditions in her own especial terms. Barnes, I take it, wrote in English, and added the local accent (as, by the way, at times did Burns); so that, if you feel not equal to an encounter with his rustic — so-called rustic—Muse, you have but to order her to change her shoes and stockings, and get out of that apron, and the like, and she falls at once to her native tongue, which is clean Wordsworthian English. Brown's Tom Baynes—'Old salt, old rip, old friend!' —is not a bit like this. In his use of Manx-English he is just as much Manx and just as little English as his author: who, indeed, invented him as a sort of escape-pipe for the mingled steam of English and Manx which was constantly generating in his own boiler. The effect is as remarkable as I know in verse; and I see no earthly reason why

that select and careful public, which is addicted to the reading of verse, should not put in its spoon and sup with the best of us. The dialect is, no doubt, an hindrance and an offence. But, after all, a dialect is soon mastered; and once you realise that 'priddhas' = *potatoes*, that 'pinjane' = *curds and whey*, that 'arrim' and 'gorrim' are only localisms for *at him* and *got him*, that 'at' is a kind of preposition-of-all-work, and means *at* or *by* or *about*, exactly as the speaker wills, there is little indeed in Brown the Manxman to keep you at a halt. And there are such worlds to bring you on! Open the *Yarns* where you will, it matters not: the book being the *Yarns*, you are ever assured of some matchless expression of something—a bee in a flower, an easy pipe, a night in the cells, a sailor's home, a fugue of Bach's, a man in drink, a woman in love, white witchcraft and black, the pool at Bethesda, a storm at sea, a carted harlot, a summer dawn, a milking, a perfect priest—*que sçays-je?* The *Yarns* are rich as life itself in character, emotion, experience, tragedy, farce, comedy, fact; and there is none of their innumerable details but is presented with

an assurance, an understanding of essentials, a mastery of means that stamp its presentation as literature. As for poetry, what is poetry? 'The only words in the only order'? So be it! Apply the test to these *Fo'c's'le Yarns*, and you will find at once that, given the dialect, they also are poetry, and poetry of the most authentic strain. 'Tis small wonder to me that he who made them believed that they would triumph in the end. He thought they would nourish and enkindle and bring on the great Manx poet. I do not agree with him there. I also believe in them, but I believe in them for themselves. We may be wrong: he, the master, I, the pupil—we may both be wrong. What is certain is that if the great Manx poet ever come along, here is as rare and fortifying a compost for him to nuzzle his genius in, as poet ever had.

After all, though, talking about Brown the poet is useless. There is nothing for it but reading him: in his English, first, certainly—in all his heights and deeps, in all his brilliancies and in all his 'wallowings.' High or low, radiant or despondent, here is a poet anyhow. You love the style, or you

do not; but, anyhow, here is a poet. A poet in English. Then comes what I think the best of all the Browns we have—the Brown of the Manx things and the *Yarns*. Herein is vastly more than there is in most of the verse written of late about especial neighbourhoods, by rhymsters of all grades of talent and accomplishment, from the departed Laureate downwards. And the end is, simply:—'Master his dialect, and read.' Master his dialect, such as it is, and become a worshipper of Brown. After all, his Tom Baynes is infinitely more literary than most of our Laureates have been, and has, besides, a very great deal to say that few indeed among our Laureates have had the wit to conceive; seeing that Tom Baynes is the most of what was written on the heart of T. E. B. Yes: that is so. And no better man, I think, has lived, and not many that were stronger or more helpful to his kind.

OLD ENGLAND

IS there in all literature a romance of the road so intimate and so inevitable—quite!—as *Lavengro*? I do not think there is. Or if such an one there be, it has yet to come into my ken. Not even the Lucius of *The Golden Ass* has a more plausible occasion; not even Don Quixote a more specious and a more searching incitement. Yet the good Alonso Quixada indoors were merely a provincial humorist with a distempered brain and an inordinate appetite for a certain type of fiction; while Lucius off the road would have eaten roses instantly, and so would have been healed of his translation, and come down to us as the hero of a feeble and futile tale of witchcraft? Yes, all that is true; and it may be that I began by pitching my note too high. You see, I was thinking, not of these archetypes, not of these inevitables, so much as of *Gil Blas*, and *Roderick Random*, and

the adventures of Guzman d'Alfarache, and that dull and deplorable *English Rogue*, that Meriton Latroon of whose author Borrow is dullard enough to remark that he was a man of singular (or surprising) genius. So was I led astray! Even so, however, and allowing for enthusiasm, it seems to me that I am very near the truth when I claim for *Lavengro* a place, so far as mere inevitableness goes, with *Don Quixote* and *The Golden Ass.* As thus. The Scholar is born into a marching regiment, and so is a wanderer in his cradle. Starting from East Dereham, he sees all manner of places before he settles down at Norwich; and if he coach thence to London, and have remarkable adventures there with publishers and Armenians and antient apple-women, you feel all the while that these things are naught, for that Mr. Petulengro is behind these things, and with him the King's Highway; so that presently London—neither understood nor realised, neither seen nor suggested—will pass like the unsubstantial pageant that it is, and in its place you will find the open road, and 'the wind on the heath, brother,' and the 'poor person's child,' and Peter Williams, Blaz-

ing Bosville, and Isopel Berners, and the red-haired priest, and all the rest of that homespun pageant which we know. Borrow calls it 'a dream,' and thus no doubt it is rightly described: being, in fact, a dream of the writer's own adventures, not exactly as they happened and as he appeared in them, but as he would have liked to believe that they happened, and thus, and not otherwise, did other people see him. A pleasing ambition? No doubt. But an innocent and humane one, surely? And, no doubt, not much unlike the reality. Or, at any rate, not nearly so much unlike the reality as you might observe, if you pushed home, in the cases of other writing men.[1] Be this as it may, his 'dream' was essentially one of the open road, and to ignore or to misapprehend the circumstances and the fancies with which it is inwrought were to make sheer nonsense of it.

[1] Thackeray, for instance, is said to have painted himself in Colonel Esmond. Now I am told that Borrow once interpellated Thackeray in society as 'the most offensive snob I have ever seen, Sir,'—or words to that effect. The distance between the several points of view is obvious; yet Thackeray may not have been utterly and hopelessly far-wandered in his presentation of himself as the sentimental Colonel. Even as Borrow may have been worse guided than I think he was when he sketched himself as the Scholar.

'Tis the most English of English books withal: even as the Scholar, for all his excursions into philology, is the most English of English men. Beef, beer, horses, *Moll Flanders* and the Church of England, the King and *The Newgate Calendar*,—what is there, what could there be more typically English than all these? Peter Williams, too, the follower of Wesley—Peter Williams, with Mr. Petulengro and his crew, and the old apple-woman, and Blazing Bosville, and the Postilion who was once in Italy, and the Scholar's father with his memories of Ben Brain: all these, like the landscape and the joy in highway and dell and by-way, in the wayside tavern and the near gypsy camp, like Thurtell and *The Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell*, are purely English, alike in conception and association and effect. And that rhapsody on the heroes of the ropes and stakes, with its special eulogy of Tom Spring:—'Hail to thee, six-foot Englishman of the brown eye, worthy to have carried a six-foot bow at Flodden,' and all the rest of it, even to the 'bold chorus,' 'Here's a health to old honest John Bull,' in which it ends:—where shall you find more

English and more valiant stuff? And 'twas ever the same with him. Read him, for instance, on the brother who wanted to go to Rome to study painting. 'What,' says he, his cup of ale gripped mightily in his good right fist, his eye in a fine pugilistic frenzy rolling—'What hast thou to do with old Rome, and thou an Englishman? Did thy blood never glow at the mention of thy native land? As an artist merely? Yes, I trow, and with reason, for thy native land need not grudge old Rome her "pictures of the world"; she has pictures of her own, "pictures of England"; and is it a new thing to toss up caps and shout—England against the world? Yes, against the world in all, in all: in science and in arms, in minstrel strain, and not less in the art "which enables the hand to deceive the intoxicated soul by means of pictures." Seek'st models? To Gainsborough and Hogarth turn, not names for the world, maybe, but English names—and England against the world!' That is explicit, is it not? Explicit, and likewise forcible! You feel as you read that about this Englishman there is no manner of nonsense—no nonsense at all! And that if he were yet

living, and any were ill-advised enough to hold a pro-Boer meeting in his neighbourhood, there would certainly be bloody noses and cracked crowns, and these of his achievement, in the hall that night! That he could rail to excellent purpose is shown in the inimitable Appendices to *The Romany Rye*; but I deem it scarce possible that, with a Little-Englander in hand, he'd have confined his treatment of the wretch to pen-and-ink. Given the occasion and the incitement, he would assuredly have found other and braver work for 'Long Melford' than the preparation of mere articles of impeachment. Manual coercion is, no doubt, a most disgusting form of tyranny; and freedom of speech is an essential item in an Englishman's birthright. But it is plain that, on such a provocation as pro-Boerism, this Englishman would have rejoiced to employ the one with a view to the suppression of the other. It is impossible, of course; but I confess that to conceive of George Borrow, alive and opugnant in the good old way, tapping Mr. Morley's claret (say), or 'administering a slashing upper-cut' (as they used to put it) to the sainted Mr. Leonard Courtney, or 'serving out' the

noble Mr. Cronwright Schreiner, with a reminiscence of Jack Randall in his antient left—this is, I confess, a pastime which, however futile, is not at all unpleasing to the unregenerate breast. In principle, I need scarce say, I am with *The Spectator*, that omniscient and most meritorious print. But if it came to practice, I fear that in such a mellay I could not find it in my heart to be on anybody's side but Borrow's. That, though, is ever the way of the Unregenerate. 'There's the wind on the heath, brother,' says the Lord of the Horse-Shoe to the Lord of Words; and the Unregenerate are with the Lord of the Horse-Shoe to the hilts. 'There's the wind on the heath, brother'; and it comes and, it goes, and there's nothing better in life. And that—for them—is the end.

I gather from Thormanby's preface to his *Boxers and their Battles* that he knew Borrow *au temps jadis*. 'Tis well—'tis mighty well. But . . .! Did Borrow, I wonder, ever shake hands and talk pugilism with 'Thormanby'? Apparently not; or 'Thormanby,' who is pleasantly garrulous and personal, and talks with a certain pride of his acquaintance with the late Jem Ward,

would probably, even certainly, have told us all about it. 'Tis pity that they did not, and that somebody skilled in shorthand was not on hand to report their talk; for men say things in the intimacy of speech which they would shrink from chronicling in cold, hard print, and these two, both experts in ring-lore, both lovers of the Noble Art, would pretty certainly have said things that the world, or some not inconsiderable part of it, would not willingly have let die. This, however, did not happen; so that one refers to it only as another notable Might-Have-Been, and passes on to the consideration of Thormanby as he is. This done, one finds that his heart is in his work, and he really has things to say: one of which is that Borrow pitched his pæan in praise of pugilism in a key perhaps too high. His own *apologia*, all the same, is by no means wanting in spirit; and he reels you off a list of English worthies who have loved the Ring which only fails of its effect by being incomplete. Why did he not include, for instance, the Elegant Earl Grey? And the Dukes of Kent and Clarence? And the sole and only Duke—the Duke of Wellington? And Barclay of Urie, the admirable

and inventive athlete? And John Hamilton Reynolds, the friend of Keats, author of that excellent sonnet to Jack Randall:—

'Good with both hands and only ten stone four'?

And Keats himself, the Poet of Beauty? And Byron, the Poet of Passion and Revolt, an original member of the Pugilistic Club, a confirmed and ardent amateur? And Yarmouth—'Red Herrings,' so they called him, from the colour of his whiskers—who presently sat to Disraeli for the Earl of Monmouth and to Thackeray for the Marquis of Steyne, and who beat the Regent dreadfully for proposing to substitute Lady Yarmouth for that Marchioness of Hertford who was nothing if not her husband's mother? And Kean, the portent, the miracle, the prodigious actor, who found (they say) one of the finest effects in the unquenched fury of a beaten 'pug'? Why, in fact, did he not name near everybody worth knowing in the Regency and later Georgian days? Pugilism was then the pastime of all good Englishmen;[1] and over a big fight, which

[1] There is never a big Scots boxer on the roll of fame; and if the Irish be many, there is but one of them, so far as I know, who takes imperial honours; and Jack Randall (for he

would be witnessed by some five-and-twenty thousand roaring citizens, and over which there would change hands sums of money not to be stated under six figures. The Ring, in fact, had so far entered into the national life that it seemed to be a vital and essential part therein. It had begun with Figg—'Th' heroical Figg so fierce and sedate'—in Hogarth's time; it had been passed from hand to hand by Broughton and Slack,[1] and Johnson and Brain, and Humphries and Mendoza and John Jackson; till, at the beginning of the present century, Jem Belcher was and deserved to be an English hero, and when Gully fought Gregson (1808) Earl Grey sent on the result of the battle to his colleague, Windham, in a ministerial despatch-box, by a ministerial

it was), Randall the Nonpareil, who fought and won fourteen battles, and 'died at the Hole in the Wall, Chancery Lane,' some four years after Byron, aged but thirty-four, was a London Irishman, 'a St. Giles's Greek'—what they now call a 'Bark'—was yet as dear to the general British heart as Cribb or Spring themselves. Randall it was who (in his fight with Turner: a fight which, by the way, was witnessed by Tom Moore, as the guest, or novice, of Scrope Davies and Mr. John Jackson) thrilled and enchanted by his brilliant practice the soul of John Keats, then (December 1818) the lover of Fanny Brawne and the poet of *Endymion* and *Isabella*, and beginning to work his hardest at *Hyperion*.

[1] 'J'en passe et des meilleurs.'

courier. *Redit et virgo.* . . . 'Twas the Golden Age: the age of Pearce and the Belchers, and Cribb the solid Englishman, and Dutch Sam, the drunken yet terrific Jew. To Thormanby, as to myself, this is all hearsay and tradition; but he comes to his subject with, I should fancy, a pretty full knowledge of those dreadful later years, in which it was shown that pugilism meant blackguardism, and that for one decent fighter there was a wilderness of scoundrels. In the end the institution was redeemed, in a kind of way and to some extent, by the piety of poor Tom Sayers; in the interval much brilliant work had been put in by such men as Dick Curtis and Young Dutch Sam, as Deaf Burke and Owen Swift and Hammer Lane—to name no more; such survivals as Jem Ward, Gully (worth a chapter in himself), Spring, Tom Belcher, Mr. Jackson, lived in a sort of rough-and-tumble odour of sanctity, and went abroad in something very like a halo till they died. But the Ring was doomed—had doomed itself; and the Ring died; and at its death there were few mourners. According to 'fierce old Cobbett'—and Borrow, who quotes, is not indisposed to

agree—the mischief began with the Jews. It may be so. They had some good men of their own—Mendoza, Dutch Sam and his boy, Belasco, Barney Aaron. But it may be so. I know not. What is certain is that, if the Jew began it, the Gentile was quick to take up the work of corrupting, and in the long-run there was little or nothing to choose between the two.

'All fights are good reading,' says Mr. Saintsbury, superbly—not to say despotically: the truth being that there is scarce an intelligible record in all the literature of fisticuffs. In *Boxiana* the reports are mere jargon and false fire—a horrible confusion of terms.[1] Jon Bee, in *The Fancy*, is 'not so bad,' as they say; but even his reports, though you think you sometimes know what he means, are cloudy and vague. There are notes in the latter pages of *Pugilistica* which are helpful, being decent reporting. But, in point of fact, no fights are good reading but those which occur in literature. After all, there is little use in reporting. Your fight is

[1] I came to the conclusion, long since, that Pierce Egan knew a certain amount of slang, was innocent of every other kind of knowledge, and never *saw* anything in his life.

a thing psychical as well as physical. It is logical throughout, and its logic is both visible and unseen: the mere cataloguing of hits on the nose (or eye, or ear, or anywhere) is not much to the purpose. Hence the apparent imbecility of *Boxiana*, the strenuous ineffectualness of Jon Bee, the failure, as history and as art, of *Pugilistica*. Poor Pierce Egan goes on—goes on! But if only Byron had set his hand to the work, and told us of Belcher and Pearce, or—still better—of Belcher and Cribb! If only Keats had set down in prose his impressions of the Randall and Turner business! Some details he sketched to Cowden Clarke; but O, if he had but pulled off the picture: as Mr. Morrison has done in *Three Rounds*,[1] or better still, perhaps—for the three rounds are fought under difficulties and in uncommon circumstances — in the scrap so masterfully presented in *A Child of the Jago*. There is a good turn-up in *Kenelm Chillingly*: a dim old-fashioned novel which, I fear, is practically unknown to the most of those who, referring to these pages, read what, in the first Lord Lytton's days, a writer on pugilism would have thought he

[1] *Tales of Mean Streets* (London: Methuen).

was familiar and comic if he wrote 'this here.' And there is excellent stuff in *Cashel Byron's Profession*—a novel written by Mr. Bernard Shaw in the days when (so far as I know) he also was a mere artist,[1] as were, and are, these others also. Thormanby, too, is an artist in his way. I like him when he writes—(apparently 'out of his own stomach': a coarse metaphor, but I am writing about pugilism)—about Hammer Lane and Yankee Sullivan —(Lane broke his arm, yet all but won the fight)—about Owen Swift and Brighton Bill—(in the sequel the Brightonian died): about everything, in fine, which he may very well have seen. But I like him still better when he is trying to make literature, and producing the net result of the confidences of others as to things he never saw. Thus, as to Cribb and Molineaux, he shows plainly that, in the first fight, the nigger was very badly used, and that, at a given moment, Cribb was a beaten man. Thus, too, he is constrained, as all must be constrained who take up the study

[1] 'Tis a delightful book—a treat of wit and insight, amusing morals and right impudence; and I should like it known of all them that read the present essay.

of the P.R., to break ground with Jem Belcher, the sole and only man of genius who ever fought in the Ring.[1] Nothing, of course, will ever give us any idea of this astonishing creature: his face—(not unlike the Young Napoleon's) struck terror to his opposites, and reminded Egan of 'a renowned military character on the Continent'; his unaccountable, irresistible hands; his gaiety, valour, *prestance*; his original and entirely inimitable method, his practice of which was so thrilling that, to quote old

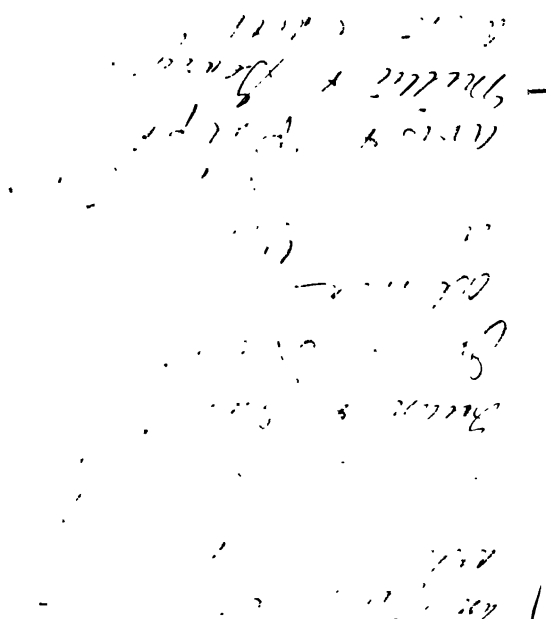
[1] Says I, one night, to my friend Professor —— I dare not give his name, without asking his permission; but I doubt not that he 'll rage when he sees it left in blank. Says I to him, one night, in a balcony at Barnes, with 'the old Father-River' having his will of us twain, and of all souls born, or fallen into his dominion, in full view: 'There are but two men in the history of the P.R. whom we can call absolutely and utterly first-rate, and they are——' 'Belcher and the Nonpareil,' he says to me; and I was left wondering. Since then, I 've seen that inspiration *plus* accomplishment is better than accomplishment *plus* instinct; and that his list of two should be shortened by one, and that one not Jem Belcher.*

* Dr. Knapp, Borrow's editor, writes thus:—'Not the old Belcher, him of 1791.' And I confess I know not what he means. Jem Belcher, the greatest fighter that ever lived, was not born in 1791; nor did he fight in 1791; nor did he die in 1791; nor in fact, did he, so far as I can discover, do anything in 1791—when, by the way, he was but ten years old. He was, in fact, only eight years Byron's senior; and he did for the Ring what Byron did for English morals.

records, you knew not when nor where nor how he had hit until you saw the effects of his hitting. That Thormanby begins his *Boxers and their Battles*, some ninety years after poor Belcher's death and burial (1811), is enough to show how tremendously he has ever bulked in the imagination of them that have studied their P.R. But Thormanby is only one of ever so many who have taken this thrice-beaten hero to their hearts. Beaten? He never was beaten, says Jon Bee. The Belcher who, being at the top of fame, and the top of life, had his eye beaten out by a racquet ball, and from being invincible became ——! Says Jon Bee:—'The real Belcher was never beaten; he couldn't be beat.' This, or words to this effect. As told by Thormanby, the story of his defeats—the abolished eye the chief factor in them—suggests Napoleon and the campaign of 1814. He was bound to be licked; and licked he was. But he was licked in such a way that men went to him in his defeats to learn how to come upsides with Victory.

BALZAC AS HE WAS

THE men of 1830 have been taxed with insincerity; and the reproach is merely just. There was none of them but would be a Byron, even though, to compass his ambition, he must do for himself what the world did for the poet of *Parisina* and *Harold* and *The Giaour*, and carefully contrive his own legend. Dumas and Berlioz wrote their Memoirs, and very delightful books they are; and *bien fol qui s'y fie*—if it be question of anything but their delightfulness. Hugo went further. He did his utmost to develop a legendary Brow as well as a legendary Hugo, and set himself, being something of a Hercules, to the great work of going down to posterity as very much of an Apollo. Balzac's ideal Balzac was as none of these others. Despite the famous Stick—the stick which set half Europe talking; despite the *loge des tigres*—that box at the Opéra to win the *entrée*



it all on black coffee, and alone—alone!
Never the ghost of a petticoat (I thought),

never the possibility, the shadow, the dream (even) of a kiss! Work, and then work, and work again; and black coffee, and a few hours' sleep; and then more work, and more black coffee; and days that were Italian Campaigns in the matter of getting money; and nights that were Jenas and Ulms in the matter of expression and conception; and a head that steamed—steamed; and—never a woman in the whole wide world? Not one! till you came to be Daniel d'Arthez, and then you fell in with the Princesse de Cadignan (sometime Diane de Maufrigneuse); and she went for you; and, elderly as you both were, you . . . But let me not anticipate! Enough to note, here and now, that that was Balzac's ideal, as adumbrated in the *Comédie humaine*:—

'The new edition fifty volumes long':—

and as preached to those young men—as Théophile Gautier—who came within range of his overpowering and bewildering personality. I was one of these. I was born the year before he died; but I lived in his work—neck and shoulders deep in it—for years; and for years I read the Balzac of Legend with the Balzac of the *Comédie*. Then I

began to know better and to see clearer. And now I can, and do, laugh at my old Ideal as cheerfully and as whole-heartedly as I can, and do, laugh at myself—his victim for so long.

There is no doubt that he worked; worked like a harvester, like a Titan, like a William Shakespeare even; for have we not those wonderful effects in intuition, which are also those incredible achievements in presentation, the ninety-odd masterpieces which make up the several sections of the *Comédie*? And behind all these are there not the three *dizains* of the *Contes drolatiques*, and in these three tens are there not a dozen stories—as *la Connétable*, and *Berthe la repentie*, and *le Péché-véniel*, and *le Succube*, and *Persévérance d'amour* —which would suffice for immortality to any one but Balzac? Work? O yes: that he worked, and worked, and killed himself with work, there is no doubt at all. Scott worked, too; but he worked easily, joyously, carelessly; and we love and revel in his loose but consummate achievement. To Balzac every page of copy meant heaven knows how many slips of proof; so that, while Sir Walter, conscious of his own

weight and strength and *prestance*, and caring little or nothing for style, would take on his printers, even after weeks of colic,[1] with a superhuman equanimity, Balzac is conscious, as he writes, that this that he is writing, or rather this that he is striving to write, is the imperfect thing—is not the half of that he wishes to tell (over his signature) to the world. So he gets to work; and set after set of proofs is ruined and recast and rewritten; and in the end everything is five or six times re-achieved. I say 'five or six,' because I wish to be credible; but if we are to believe himself, the statement is utterly inadequate. His *Pierrette*, for instance, cost him thirteen sets of proofs and thirteen rewritings; his *Birotteau*, seventeen sets of proofs and seventeen rewritings; and so with the rest. The effort is so prodigious, the outcome so magnificent, that you are neither displeased nor surprised to find him likening himself, as he gladly does, to Napoleon. There, in effect, he sits —sits in his white monk's frock: distilling corruption; inventing characters, stories,

[1] As with *The Bride of Lammermoor*: dictated to Laidlaw when, what with pains and fomentations and dictations, the noble creature knew not what he had done.

facts, societies, moralities, philosophies, religions; producing Vautrins and Séraphitas with an equal interest in the result, an equal constancy in the process of creation; ranging between heaven-high (as he conceives of heaven) and hell-deep with an imperturbable assurance, an irresistible persuasiveness, an incomparable power. And at fifty, or so, he dies; and you may reflect that, if he'd never been, the world of Fiction were the poorer by something like two thousand figures of men and women, and by not a few of the most notable stories ever made. Yes: as I said before, there is no doubt that he *worked*; as there is none that his *œuvre* is *aere perennius*, at the same time that it is unique in human achievement.

It is another-guess matter with his Debts, and of these I shall say no more than that Léon Gozlan (the Nathan of the *Comédie*), who knew him intimately, declined to believe in their existence, and insisted, more or less, that they were his day-dreams, his illusions, the sole 'enchanted cigarettes' which he permitted himself to smoke. 'Tis the same, but a great deal more flagrant and more demonstrable, with that other article

of faith—his Chastity. He preached the virtue with a most constant mouth; and with a most constant heart he declined to practise it. M. de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, who knows his Balzac like the clock, is careful to note that the affectation of continence was an essential element in Balzac's *pose*, and remains an essential feature in Balzac's legend. It is the merest imposture; yet the great man, 'in his many *aventures d'amour*' (S. de L.), was solicitous, even resolute, to maintain it. From two-and-twenty onwards he was the *protégé* of a certain Mme. de B——: 'la *dilecta*,' he calls her: who, being twice his age, and almost beyond experience credulous, motherly, sisterly, kind, was such an influence in his life that after her death he was never quite the same. But a Mme. de B., however she 'fill the bill' when one is two-and-twenty and a nobody, is apt to be superfluous when one is two-and-thirty, and withal the author of *le Chat qui pelotte*, and *la Vendetta*, and *les Chouans*, and the *Peau de chagrin*, and *la Physiologie du mariage*. By that time other women, veiled or not, sincere or not, curious certainly, had come upon the scene. By that time, in fact, the

Hysteriac—the Lady-Errant, if you will: the Woman who Wants to Know—had realised that here was her Confessor-General; of whom she might ask such questions as she would, and to whom she might look for such answers as she was prepared to receive. It is, I take it, to the credit of Balzac's arch-illusion that, whatever the *cliente's* name, she was positively assured that She, and She only, was Woman to him: that, apart from Her, life was a desperate round of copy, proofs, black coffee, debts, and six hours' sleep out of the twenty-four. That She believed it is improbable; but 'tis certain that Balzac went on saying it. Meanwhile, the dedicatee of *Eugénie Grandet* brought him a daughter; friends of his knew of a son and of yet another daughter—both dead within the last few years; so late as 1846, a girl child, 'née à six mois,' declared herself in circumstances so moving that, according to M. de Lovenjoul, 'les rapides progrès' of Balzac's 'maladies de cœur' were 'dus en partie à cette terrible aventure.' We know not precisely what this means. What we do know is that the 'Maria' of *Eugénie Grandet*—'la plus naïve créature qui soit . . . qui vient chez moi en cachette, n'exige ni

correspondance ni soins, et qui dit: "Aime-moi un an, je t'aimerai toute ma vie"'—was no more Balzac's 'only She' than the '*dilecta*' herself, or than that Mme. la Marquise de Castries, who, 'quoique voluptueuse comme mille chats,' was, Balzac told his sister, 'ni gracieuse ni femme.' What we know, too, is that, however many uniques there were, Balzac, braggart and vocal as he was in all other relations of life, was careful to compromise no one of them. On the contrary, 'Blessed are the pure in fact,' he said, 'for they alone shall do enduring work.' It was an excellent device. He made his legend, and behind it did as he would. In reality he was the jovial Tourangeau of *les Contes drolatiques*. In the public eye he was the creator of Mme. de Mortsauf and the Bennassis of *le Médecin de campagne*, the author of *Eugénie Grandet*, and *le Curé de village:* a great artist, a great moralist, a great satirist; a worker so obstinate and so energetic that he had no time in which to be adventurous—no time, in fact, for anything but proofs and copy, copy and proofs—copy and proofs, and black, black coffee, and never a petticoat from one book's end to another's. And his *clientes*, his women (if I

may use the phrase) 'played up.' It is a mistake to suppose that Nora Helmer always slams the door behind her when she goes forth to find herself. The Nora Helmers who came and went about Balzac knew a trick worth two of that. They discovered themselves at home, and went abroad, as in the ordinary run of things, to get their discovery confirmed. That is the great, the essential, difference between Nora Helmer and (say) the Duchesse de Langeais. This, however, is by the way. The thing to insist on is that all they who went to Honoré de Balzac for certificates of self-discovery got plenty of Sentiment from him, and were happy. What the sentiment was worth they only know who have compared his *Lys dans la vallée* (let us say) and his stories of the building of Azay-le-Rideau and the humours of King Louis XI.

I take it, then, that Balzac the *féministe*, Balzac the *amateur des femmes*, was, despite his amazing flow of sentimental fancy and speech, severely practical. Yet the great affair of his life was largely an affair of Sentiment and the Fine Shades, and it was his, in the very prime of his life and fame, to perform such a scamper through the *Pays*

du tendre as few men have achieved and survived. It began in 1832, when he was thirty-three years old, and its inspiration was a lady who signed herself 'Une Étrangère,' and whose letter bore the post-mark of Odessa. That letter, I believe, is lost. Lost or not, it had its effect on Balzac's life and Balzac's mind, and was, in fact, the beginning of a connexion that ended only with Balzac's death. It seems to have been of no particular merit; but it was anonymous, it reproached the poet with the cynicism of the *Peau de chagrin*, it insisted that he should return to the purer atmosphere of the *Scènes de la Vie privée;* and, as I have said, it immensely impressed the recipient, who seems to have set to work to knock up a passion as soon as ever he had received and read. Came a second (acknowledged in the *Quotidienne*, and thereby establishing in France what is known to us as the Agony Column), and a third; and then, nobody knows how, the nympholept was bidden to Neuchâtel. He had already sought to mark his appreciation of the Étrangère's attentions by essaying to dedicate (with an appropriate date) a certain *novelle* 'Diis ignotis,' and had been foiled of

his intent by the '*dilecta*,' who was in the habit of reading his proofs, and who made him suppress the dedication and the sheet in which it appeared; and for this reason and others he had to invent a pretext for leaving Paris which would serve him at once at home and abroad. He was equal to the occasion, and repaired to Neuchâtel. There are two accounts of the meeting. One is, that he found her reading Balzac, looked at her, was recognised, and was instantly honoured with what Browning calls 'the blessing of embrace'; another, that the lady, having recognised, was disgusted by the squatness, the drover-like aspect, the general commonness in effect of her adored Master, and that he had to put forth his best to prove that he was essentially the Balzac of her dream. Whichever we accept, it is certain that Balzac was, so to say, clean bowled by the Étrangère's first ball. Writing to his sister, he gives such an account of the business as might come from the author of the *Physiologie du mariage*: in the course of which he touches off Mme. de Castries and the '*dilecta*,' owns that a certain 'simple et délicieuse bourgeoise'—the Maria of the *Grandet* dedication—has made him a father,

enumerates the new woman's points, talks of 'le dammé mari,' notes that 'à l'ombre d'un chêne s'est donné le furtif baiser premier de l'amour,' and then, physiologist of marriage—cynic, ribald, practical amorist—as he is, proceeds to give himself away with both hands. 'Puis,' says he, 'comme notre mari s'achemine vers la soixantaine, j'ai juré d'attendre, et *elle* de me resérver sa main, son cœur.' No schoolgirl ever showed so much facility—no schoolboy such a superb capacity for surrender! Yet this was soon to be the Balzac of *Goriot* and the *Illusions perdues* and *la Fille aux yeux d'or*! This was the creator of la Palférine, and de Marsay, and Corentine, and Rastignac, and Mâme Nourrisson, and the Mlles. Goriot, and Frémiet, and Gobseck, and Vautrin, and Valérie de Marneffe, and Philippe Bridau, and Crevel, and Hulot—the great all-father of corruptions, the Homer (as it were) of whatever is vilest and most artful in fiction! If it were not true, 'twould be incredible—would it not?

It was a Polish lady—a Mme. Hanski or Hanska—who did this feat. She was five-and-twenty years her husband's junior, but had had several children by him, of whom

but one survived. Balzac saw the Hanskis again at Geneva, and yet again at Vienna; and in the space between and for years to come he 'reeled it off.' She was his 'chère épouse d'amour,' his 'ange adoré,' his 'ange idolatré,' his 'cher trésor en bonheur,' his 'chère noble âme,' his 'belle et noble maîtresse,' 'ma grande souveraine, ma fée, ma femme,' his 'chère lumière du monde'; and his refrain is 'Adoremus in æternum.' The Man of the Fine Shades has his chance, and goes for it through letter after letter, with all the strength that is in his big, subtle, seething, teeming brain. With the years, though, the nympholept changes his tone, and gets into another key. M. de Hanski seems to have seen elucubrations of his, and to have been by no means pleased with them. Balzac's apologies to 'notre mari' are things to read, especially in their place among the letters. M. de Hanski is wholly in error, it appears. The fact is, Mme. de Hanska had remarked one day, in Balzac's hearing, that she had never had a love-letter in her life; and Balzac had written these things of which M. de Hanski complains, in pure friendliness, just to show her what love-letters are like! I do not

think that 'notre mari' was altogether so credulous as his would-be 'Minotaur' would have liked him to be. In any case, Balzac the nympholept goes under, and his room is filled by Balzac the Writer, Balzac the Adventurer, Balzac the Man of Debts, the behemoth of Chastity, the leviathan 'pour copie conforme.' His illusions are with him first and last; so that some of his letters, if you could but believe him, would read tragically enough. But belief in him is impossible. These letters of his to Mme. Hanska are plainly the outcome of a strong delusion. I do not doubt that they helped him in his struggle with life and time. But I would not, for all their particularity, hang any one of my cats upon their testimony.

He is always going to Russia; but somehow he never goes. He has a dozen volumes to write, three stories to finish, ten or twenty thousand francs to raise, an illness the result of months of overwork—(but for his Chastity, his doctor tells him, he had been a dead man!)—to recover from; and he never goes. He can find time for Sardinia; he can make none for the Ukraine. So it goes on till 1841, when M. de Hanski died; and in 1842 Balzac journeyed to Russia.

They were not married, however—he and his Eve—till the April of 1850; and between 1841 and 1851 there is, as we have seen, a marking date—even 1846. For the rest, the marriage seems to have been none of the best. Balzac died some three or four months after the event; and Victor Hugo (in *Choses vues*) has told us how he died, and where was Mme. de Balzac when death took him away. Thus passes the Sentimentalist, the man who insists on seeing life other than it is, and on making facts other than they are. His widow was not of his kidney; and when she died, some years ago, she had recognised her true place in time, and was not even her husband's widow, but a figure which Balzac would have loved to study and to present: among the grimiest in the *Comédie*.

THE TWO HUGOS

WHEN Renan says of Nero that he had 'the intellect of one of Victor Hugo's heroes,' he strikes a shrewd blow at Hugo as well as at Didier and Ruy Blas, at the poet of *les Orientales* and *la Légende* as well as at Gwynplaine and Hernani and Jean Valjean. For a man's heroes are that part of his work which he loves best, and on which—

> Perchance as finding there unconsciously
> Some image of himself—

he lingers with the most complacency. Now, it was written of Hugo—by no less an artist in criticism than Heine—that somewhere or other, on this part of his person or on that, he had, however artfully dissembled, a hump—a malformation which insisted on getting itself manifested in everything he did; and it was written of Hugo's heroes—by no less an expert in character than Thackeray—that they were

monsters all: creatures with humps, who might not be measured by the standards in use among ordinary human beings. Both these opinions are irrefragable. Hugo's heroes *are* monsters, and they are monsters because Hugo had a hump: not a hump physical, as Heine was so malevolent as to suggest, but a hump moral and spiritual, which hump its owner could not choose but bestow upon the several creatures of his fancy. One and all, they are expressions of sentiment gone wrong; and as the name of Hugo's hump—which is Hugo's master-quality—was Insincerity, they are one and all impossible and incredible. There are times when Hugo, if he were not true to fact, if he had not lived and moved and had actual being, would seem incredible and impossible as the most personal of his own creations. One might say of him, with perfect truth, that life for him was one long sequence of attitudes, all exaggerated, and each one nothing if not conscious and deliberate. All were cleverly conceived and done, for Hugo (his genius apart) was in some ways an uncommonly clever fellow: a man with a keen eye for the main chance, an extraordinary feeling for Number One,

and a very natural resolve to make the most he could by (as well as of) an unrivalled technical endowment. But all were attitudes, and now there is none but recalls that saying of Renan's with which I begin this Note.

Of what size and quality, in effect, are the intellects of Hugo's heroes? And in what degree do they differ from Hugo's own? The answer consists in another question:—Is it possible to conceive of Hernani or of Ruy Blas with any brains but the shallowest? I do not think it is. Hernani is a fool positive; or the Horn would leave him cold, and there would be no play. Ruy Blas is a fool positive; or he would make no more of Don Salluste than of the dust under his foot, and again there would be no play. That both Ruy Blas and Hernani are in all other respects impossible—that they are as false to history as they are false to nature—has nothing to do with the present contention. They are good enough Hugo to be typical Hugo; and the sole conclusion possible about them is that they have only the very rudiments of brains, and that what in human beings is called character is shown in them as an instinctive and overmastering capacity for attitude. They have, that is,

the qualities and the defect of their creator. They have presence, rhetoric, music, colour, a certain flamboyancy in inverisimilitude. But they are also liars born and made: they are hard put to it to mean a word they say. Or, if they be not liars, and if it be expected of you that you take their utterances for gospel, then are they the worst witted and the most helpless impostors that ever foisted themselves upon a thrice-gullible public. And here their creator meets and beats them on their own ground; and, in the long-run, one is left gasping at the spectacle —of assurance, ignorance, insincerity, and sham superiority — which, thanks to his abounding lyrism, his magnificent temperament, and his scarce less magnificent capacity for expressing his *néant* — the Bottomless Pit that was innate, essential Hugo—in brilliant and sonorous verse, in antithetic and fanciful prose, he contrived to offer to the world until the end.

Attitude — attitude — and again and always attitude: in the beginning, as in the end, attitude and an almost unnatural mastery of rhythm and speech. That is the secret of his success, that the explanation of the hold he had upon his lieges and the

world. His ignorance runs deeper than ever plummet sounded; so that his *Cromwell*, his *Marie Tudor*, his *l'Homme qui rit*—to name but these—might stand, were they not already forgotten, for monuments of human impudence at the same time that they are achievements in human nescience. For (be it noted) he is always careful to insist upon the variety and the extent of his reading: he knows his public thoroughly, and he knows—and here is the cleverness which distinguishes his *pose*—that his public is even less bookish than himself, and will take his learning for granted *because* he insists on it, and *because* he writes good verses. He believes in his as Didier in the authenticity of Marion de l'Orme's new-made virginity: because he will, and there is none to say him nay. And his egotism is so vigorous that he has no eye and no ear and no suspicion of the vengeful Muse of History, whose servants will presently come down upon him, upset all his facts, make hay of his conclusions, and demonstrate that, whatever he may have known of character and life, he knew absolutely nothing, for all his solemn and imposing countenance and his 'austere regard of

control'—nothing, I say, of history, nothing of books, nothing of anything excepting the fact that he, Hugo, was superior to facts and rules, and that, for the moment at least, he spoke as one inspired, and might, without fear of questioning, say anything he would. It was not for nothing that he called himself Olympio; wrote his own life—or dictated it to his wife; and insisted that (in the words of 'our immortal Chiggle, sir'), his Brow was more than mortal.[1] He was so self-satisfied, he had so little sense of humour, that he thought it all true, and struck such attitudes as seemed appropriate to his occasions in the full belief that, inasmuch as they were his, they were removed beyond criticism. In a sense he was justified of himself; for it is demonstrable to the hilt that he made such verses as no Frenchman had ever made, and had, besides, such a temperament as has been matched, I think, by none but our Mr.

[1] 'Il avait en lui beaucoup de l'Hercule': thus M. Rodin to the present writer and to R. L. S. as we were considering his magnificent bust of Hugo. Now, the said bust is rather Herculean than Apollonian: the Brow, that is, is sacrificed to the back-head, which, in Hugo, as in Gladstone, was superb. The bust, therefore, was not accepted by the Family, nor was Rodin called in to take the poet's death-mask, still less to design the poet's monument.

Gladstone's within the memory of man. Had the blind gods but given a touch of conscious fun to either, how much richer had they left the world in fact and how much poorer in occasions to scoff! It is told of Victor Hugo that, being taken *in flagrante delicto*, by an outraged husband and a Commissaire in a tricoloured scarf, he was subjected to a formal *interrogatoire*, and that, being attired in the costume which is usual at such passes in human existence, he responded to the question as to his status exactly as Ruy Blas or Didier or Gwynplaine or Hernani or Ruy Gomez would have answered, in these noble words: 'Monsieur, je suis pair de France!' Is there such an entire and perfect chrysolite of fatuousness in all the history of genius? He was a *pair de France*, you see, and, being a *pair de France*, as much above and beyond the law which governs grocers and coal-mongers and the like as Lauzun or Richelieu or Bassompierre. Does not the answer read as something straight from one of his own immortal works? Can you not see Frédérick dressing himself—'très digne' —in whatever is handy, and taking the stage, to give it out with one of those

gestures 'as of an inspired windmill' of which he had the secret; while Georges (or Mars, or Dorval) sobs, artfully denuded, L. C.? That, however, is Hugo the man and Hugo the maker of heroes. As the parodist, poor André Gill, once wrote: — 'Tout [Hugo] est là. Ou là. Là ou là? Tyrolienne. Passons.' Add the lyrist of *les Orientales* and *les Contemplations* and *les Châtiments* and the rest, and you begin to understand the kind of effect he had upon his lieges and upon the world. It was Théophile Gautier, I believe, who said that he could not so much as think that Hugo had made a bad verse unless he were fathoms underground, in black darkness, utterly removed from human cognisance. Others were more critical and less loyal:—

Je l'admire vraiment.—Et franchement, personne
Ne me rappelle mieux, parfois, le mardi-gras.
Quel porteur d'oripeau! quel faiseur d'embarras!
Et que souvent il pèse! et quel creux rauque il sonne!

. . . . . .

Nul n'a fait tant de vers ni si beaux ni si drôles:
Il est grand, il est bas; il engraisse nos Gaules,
—Mais jusqu'à les crever!—d'un fumier précieux.

I should like to quote the whole sonnet, which is sound criticism throughout. But

the gist of it is enough, and the 'fumier précieux' is said once and for all time. As for the antithesis—'Il est grand, il est bas'—that also were demonstrable to the hilt. I need not note that, on the one hand, Hugo was a great lyric poet, and that, on the other, Hugo's heroes are Hugo's ideals—are Hugo's conceptions of Hugo in certain circumstances, under certain conditions, and at grip with certain chances. Now, as Hugo's heroes are all lackbrains, with a passion for attitude, and a temperament which sets them higher than right or wrong—are idiots, in short, or sentimental *rastaquouères*, or both—it follows that . . . Well, it follows that, given a certain endowment, a certain technical imagination, a man needs neither character nor intellect of the highest class to be a very considerable poet.

It was Got, himself a most intelligent man, who declared that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, you might state as incontrovertible the paradox that the more clever the man the worse the actor. Put the thing thus: the more clever the man *outside his work*, and you may apply Got's test to most of the arts, and find that there is much to be said in its favour. Take

painting, for instance. One has always heard that Claude was both illiterate and dull; yet are his landscapes of the noblest ever made. One hears little or nothing of Turner to make one sorry that one did not know him; yet one is told that his achievement is among the highest in all the range of art. For my part, I know nothing which gives me a greater sense of mastery, a fuller feeling of completeness, than a good Corot; but I have yet to read anything which shows that, outside his pictures, Corot was by so much as one degree removed from Colonel Newcome or Joe Gargery. Again, few better workmen than Courbet have practised painting since this century began; yet Courbet *intime* was a puzzle-headed, gross, and rather drunken boor. Or take the case of music. Outside his instruments, Beethoven was wellnigh inarticulate; and Beethoven is the greatest of them all. In literature it is other-guess work. Or rather, in literature it may be; for the medium of literature is also the medium of science and philosophy, and withal the means of expression common to all mankind; and Shakespeare and Goethe and Dante are there to show that one may have all the

brains that are going, and be the greater artist and poet for the possession. But it by no means follows that, because a man works in speech, and may say things at the same time that he is making poetry, he is poet and thinker both. For on the other side—remote from Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe—is Browning, who really was (they tell me) an infinitely clever fellow—a person with a brain of extraordinary range and subtilty—yet who chiefly lives as a kind of Shocking Case, an Awful Warning, an exemplar of everything the aspirant should not do. Decidedly, there is something in the old actor's theory. There is nothing more exquisite in literature than the best of Herrick—is there? Yet who would 'pass his word for twopence' that Herrick had, outside his art, any more intelligence than the other country parsons of his time? And is not Hugo the lyrist great and satisfying on the whole in spite of Hugo the intellect and the man? Speaking in his own name, as an agent in human affairs, as an influence on human destiny, was he ever aught but fatuous? Who can think so? You may read Thackeray on his intercession with the existing King for a man's life in the early

Thirties. It is painful reading, though apparently the few poor verses did their work. In 1871 he was issuing manifestoes to the Germans, urging on them the duty of sparing Paris and proclaiming the German Republic. He knew nothing when he began, that is; and he knew nothing when he ended. In the half-century between he had written many, very many delightful verses, with many, very many—an infinite array, in fact—of verses that are not delightful at all. At the last he approved himself a kind of poetry-machine, grinding out alexandrines and octosyllabics and all the other stuff of the trade as mechanically as Mr. Babbage's apparatus dealt with calculations. In all there are signs of the fecund and brilliant technical imagination which had been his from the first; in all there are notes of technical excellence which none living could equal. But in all there is so much of Heine's hump that to read *l'Art d'être grand-père* (let us say) is to be sick of children, and to wonder why persons without tact, without reticence, without any of the quality of *virtus*—that honourable and engaging quality!—should be gifted as Hugo was, and should be per-

mitted, as Hugo was, to go on, year after year, degrading their endowment. That said, I hasten to add that I should dearly like to compile an anthology from Hugo's verse. 'Tis an impossible notion, of course; for was not everything he wrote inspired? And is not everything he wrote thrice sacrosaint? But I think that, supposing it were not impossible, I could make a book out of his eight-and-forty volumes that would live.

Out of his verse, of course—out of his verse! There is but one way to enjoy your Hugo; and that is to read his verses—here and there; and to leave his prose alone. If you read the verse you get the poet—often, and often, and very often. If you read the prose, you get the Bounder, the *rastaq*—I will not say 'always,' but more often than is good for your peace of mind. In the so-called *Memoirs*, you get very little else than the Bounder; and he does not emerge from the experience with anything like flying colours and a whole skin. There is here some quite magnificent blither about the Improper Person who loves the Robber:—

> She was a harlot and he was a thief,
> But they loved each other beyond belief:—

and how they live in divers cells of the subterranean Void; and how his Smile is hell-spoiled, but hers is tinctured with the hues of heaven; and how there would be no harlots if it were not for human nature, and no thieves but for cruel and most unsentimental laws; and how, despite the efforts of God and Man and the Police, the Thief and the Harlot contrive to exchange 'the kiss of azure.' But the worst of all are the references during the Siege to 'Little Jeanne.' The whole business of the Siege —which Hugo thoroughly enjoyed—is an exhibition of the Heinesque *bosse*. But 'tis only when the poet takes on 'Little Jeanne,' and runs her (so to speak) in and with and between the bulletins—her caudle-cup among the cannon, her bib against the bayonets—that you see how essential, how indestructible was the sentimental *rastaq* in Victor Hugo, and how hard it is for decent people to have anything to do with him.

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